

THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ:  
ITS CHARACTER AND PURPOSE

*ALSO*

ROSICRUCIANISM AND MODERN INITIATION

RUDOLF STEINER

SOME OTHER WORKS BY RUDOLF STEINER

FOUR MYSTERY PLAYS (2 VOLS.)  
AN OUTLINE OF OCCULT SCIENCE  
THE MYSTERIES (DIE GEHEIMNISSE)  
JESHU BEN PANDIRA  
GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN  
GOSPEL OF ST. MARK  
GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW  
GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE  
EAST IN THE LIGHT OF THE WEST  
KNOWLEDGE OF HIGHER WORLDS  
MYSTICISM AND MODERN THOUGHT  
CHRISTIANITY AS MYSTICAL FACT

RUDOLF STEINER PUBLISHING CO.,  
54 Bloomsbury Street,  
W.C.1

*Send for price list*

BF  
1623  
R7  
S67

RUDOLF STEINER

THE MISSION OF  
CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ :  
ITS CHARACTER AND PURPOSE

*Transcriptions and Notes of lectures given  
in the years 1911 and 1912.*

TRANSLATED BY DOROTHY OSMOND

ROSICRUCIANISM AND MODERN  
INITIATION

TRANSLATED BY MARY ADAMS

LONDON :  
RUDOLF STEINER PUBLISHING CO.,  
54 BLOOMSBURY STREET, W.C.1

Copyright 1950  
Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co.

Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY W. & J. MACKAY & CO., LTD., CHATHAM



## CONTENTS

### THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD : MARIE STEINER	7
CASSEL I. THE DAWN OF OCCULTISM IN THE MODERN AGE . . . . .	13
<p>Spiritual Science in historical evolution and its pivot in Rosicrucianism—Mention of 3rd April, 33 A.D.—The period of darkness in the thirteenth century and its ending—The occult mission of the Twelve Wise Men and their work in connection with the youth who in Initiation became Christian Rosenkreutz—The crisis in the world of the demons—Salvation through cultivation of the powers of the "I."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">27th January, 1912</p>	
CASSEL II. . . . .	23
<p>Three categories of experiences in the life of soul—Chance and Necessity—Blows of fate and intimate occurrences in life—Fading memories in the life of thought and ideation ; permanent memories in the life of feeling ; these are transformed into impulses of will—Through such impulses of will we can recognise the beckoning sign given by Christian Rosenkreutz to those chosen by him.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29th January, 1912</p>	
VIENNA I. THE TRUE ATTITUDE TO KARMA .	32
<p>The nature of karma as destiny—The "wiser being" within us—Study of karma and how karma is experienced in the world—Happiness and joy are experiences bestowed by Grace.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8th February, 1912</p>	
VIENNA II. INTIMATE WORKINGS OF KARMA .	49
<p>Exercises for the development of memory belonging to the life of feeling—The consequences of experiences in the spiritual world—The condition of darkness in the twelfth-thirteenth century—The resurrection of the ancient forms of sacred wisdom in the souls of the Twelve in the thirteenth century A.D.—Into this "College" of the Twelve, a Thirteenth is taken.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">9th February, 1912</p>	
MUNICH. THE CHRIST IMPULSE AS LIVING REALITY . . . . .	65
<p>The work of the Bodhisattvas—The office and rank of Buddhahood—The successor of Gautama Buddha—Prophetic anticipation of the Christ Mystery in the Schools of the Essenes—The Christ Mystery presented in the form of pictorial enactments in the ancient rituals—Jeshu ben Pandira and Matthew—The</p>	

## CONTENTS

Matthew Gospel describes the stages of the old Initiation up to the point where Jesus becomes the bearer of Christ—The content and substance of the Mysteries are enacted on the physical plane as a reality of world-history—During the middle years of life a great transformation takes place in the soul of one who is destined to receive the Bodhisattva into himself—In about 3,000 years from now the Bodhisattva will become the Maitreya Buddha, the Bringer of the Good through the power of the word—Vision in the astral sphere of the Christ in His Ether-Form ; later on, this Form is revealed in the aesthetic and then in the moral spheres—The sources of Christianity and the spiritual preparations made by the twelve wise men in the thirteenth century—The manuscript of the Matthew Gospel translated by Jerome.

18th and 20th November, 1911

### ST. GALLÉN. "THE STARRY HEAVEN ABOVE ME— THE MORAL LAW WITHIN ME" .

74

The Akasha Chronicle of the Sun—Journey through the heavens of the fixed stars ; thence the return through the planetary spheres to the next birth.

19th December, 1912

### NEUCHÂTEL. THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN ROSEN- KREUTZ . . . . .

81

Copernicanism and the revolutionary change in human thinking—The illusory character of this new form of knowledge—The relation of Christian Rosenkreutz to Gautama Buddha—The Mystery-Centre by the Black Sea where Buddha taught, in his spirit-form—His work is subsequently continued by his pupil, St. Francis of Assisi—The anxiety among occultists as to the threatened separation of men into two categories—Christian Rosenkreutz sends Buddha, his closest pupil, to Mars—The purification of Mars through Buddha's deed of sacrifice—The Mars-forces, now radiating peace, work into the souls of men between death and a new birth.

A potent and effective Meditation is to picture the deeds of Christian Rosenkreutz in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries—Christian Rosenkreutz in the midst of the Twelve—Buddha is sent by him to perform a cosmic deed of sacrifice on Mars—Reference to the Sermon at Benares.

18th December, 1912

### ROSICRUCIANISM AND MODERN INITIATION (Six Lectures) . . . . .

91

4th—13th January, 1924

## FOREWORD

MARIE STEINER

IN connection with the Congress held by the "Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society" in Budapest in the year 1909, Dr. Steiner gave a Lecture-Course entitled: "Theosophy and Occultism of the Rosicrucians." The Mystery of Golgotha is there indicated as the great turning-point between the old, now already fading Mystery-wisdom and the wisdom in its new form of revelation wherein account is taken of the faculty of thought possessed by a maturer humanity and of the advance of culture and civilisation. Theosophia, the Divine Wisdom, could not, as in earlier times, flow as inner illumination into the hardened constitution of man. Intellect, the more recent faculty of the soul, was directed to the world of sense and its phenomena. Theosophy was rejected by the scholars with a shrug of the shoulders and the very word brought a supercilious smile from the monists. Dr. Steiner, however, was trying to restore to this word its whole weight and spiritual significance and to show how the roots of all later knowledge lie in Theosophy, how it unites East and West, how in it all the creeds are integral parts of one great harmony.

This had also been the fundamental conception of the Founder of the Theosophical Society but she understood nothing of the essence of Christianity and disputed its unique significance. Her tendency to place too much



reliance upon spiritualistic communications drew her into the net of an oriental stream only too ready to use this instrument for its own ends—to begin with under the cloak of Neo-Buddhism then represented in the person of Charles Leadbeater, a former priest of the Anglican Church. Annie Besant, a pupil of Charles Bradlaugh, a free-thinker and the most brilliant orator of the day in the field of political and social reform, had also been so deeply influenced by spiritualistic communications that on the advice of William Stead she went to Madame Blavatsky towards the end of the latter's life and became her ardent follower. Stead's spiritualistic circle was influential and the Theosophical Society, with its much purer spiritual foundations, had here a dangerous rival.

Dr. Steiner brought light to bear upon all these developments, upon their aims and aberrations, and raised Theosophy to heights far transcending the narrow sphere of the Theosophical Society. Alarmed by this, the Indian inspirers behind the Adyar Society, with their nationalistic aims, took their own measures.—The imminence of a return of Christ was announced and the assertion made that he would incarnate in an Indian boy. A newly founded Order, the “Star in the East,” using the widespread organisation of the Theosophical Society, was expected to achieve the aim that had met with failure in Palestine.

Not very long after the Budapest Congress, these developments began to be felt in the sphere of Dr. Steiner's lecturing activities. Disquieted by the beginnings of the propaganda for the Star in the East, Groups begged Dr. Steiner to speak about these matters. This caused alarm to the organisers of the Genoa Congress, who thought that the scientific as well as the

esoteric discussions with Dr. Steiner would be too dangerous a ground, and for extremely threadbare reasons the Congress was cancelled at the last moment. Many of those taking part were already on their way—we too. A number of Groups in Switzerland took advantage of this opportunity to ask Dr. Steiner for lectures. They wanted to understand the meaning and significance of the Michael Impulse which denotes the turning-point in the historic evolution of the Mystery-wisdom. The Intelligence ruled over in the spiritual world by the hierarchy of Michael had now come down to humanity. It was for men to receive this Intelligence consciously into their impulses of will and thenceforward to play their part in shaping a future wherein the human “ I ” will achieve union with the Divine “ I.” For this goal of the future men must be prepared, a transformation wrought in their souls ; they must “ change their hearts and minds.” To bring this about was the task of Rudolf Steiner. The moment had arrived for treading the path which liberates the Spirit from the grip of the material powers. The first healthy step to be taken along this path by the pupil of spiritual knowledge, is *study*.

As the theme chosen for Genoa had been “ From Buddha to Christ,” it was natural that the lectures now given in Switzerland should shed the light of Spiritual Science not only upon the earlier connections between the Buddha and Christ Jesus but also upon the lasting connections indicated by the Essene wisdom contained in the Gospels. This is the theme which gives these studies their special character—which could only be brought out by outlining the historical development of the Mystery-wisdom. The ancient revelations of the Mysteries had shed light into many forms of culture,

but were now spent ; symptoms of decay and increasing sterility of thought were everywhere in evidence. Then, from heights of Spirit, the Michael Impulse came down to the Earth—in order gradually to stir and flame through the hearts of men. The intellect was pervaded by spiritual fire, the lower human “ I ” lifted nearer to the ideal of times to come : union with the Divine “ I.” To awaken understanding of these goals, to establish them firmly on the ground of their spiritual origins and to place them in living pictures before the souls of men—such was the task of Rudolf Steiner.

This brought the inevitable counterblow from the opposing powers ; into this they knew they must drive their wedge. The development of the human being in freedom, this gift bestowed by Michael, must be checked and the hearts and minds of men incited to resistance. In his *Mystery Plays*\*, Rudolf Steiner has given us living pictures of this : the human being between Lucifer and Ahriman—now succumbing to their promptings, now overcoming them, but nevertheless bearing them in the soul like a poison that may at any time begin to work. We too shall continue to bear this picture and its substance in our souls.

The full content of the lectures, however, has not been preserved, for we possess no good transcriptions. The fact that no really reliable and expert stenographer was available at the time seems like a counterblow from the opposing powers. Besides the abbreviated reports of the Cassel lectures, we have in some cases only fragments, in others, scattered notes strung together. But the essential threads have been preserved and an attempt at compilation has been made. The attempt does not always succeed from the point of view of convincing style, but

\**Four Mystery Plays* (2 vols.).



the impetus for effort in thought and study will be all the stronger.

The activities of the Star in the East led, finally, to the exclusion of the German section from the Theosophical Society ; this, however, had been preceded by the forming of a Union which included people in other countries who opposed this piece of Adyar sectarianism and led to the foundation of the Anthroposophical Society. For a time, care was necessary to prevent confusion as between the two Societies and so for the Movement associated with him, Rudolf Steiner chose the name Anthroposophy—the Divine Wisdom finding its fulfilment in man. Theosophy and Anthroposophy are one, provided the soul has cast away its dross. And Rudolf Steiner showed us how this can be done.

The new Indian Messiah soon cast off the shackles of the renown that had been forced upon him and retired to private life in California. Annie Besant was obliged to renounce her cherished dream and died at a very great age. It is rumoured that the question of the dissolution of the Adyar Society was considered but that this proved impossible owing to the extensive material possessions. Jinarajadasa, my good friend from the days of the founding of the Italian Section, succeeded Annie Besant as President. The branch of the Theosophical Society which had seceded at the time of the Judge conflict and to which Madame Blavatsky's niece belonged, had found in Mrs. Catharine Tingley a leader of energy and initiative, but she too had died.

The old conditions have now faded away. Those grotesque edifices of phantasy can no longer be associated with the Anthroposophical, formerly Theosophical, Movement, for they have crumbled to pieces. We can allow the word Theosophy again to come to its own, as

did Rudolf Steiner when he was trying to restore to this word its primary and true significance.

Besides laying emphasis on the essential character of Spiritual Science in the post-Christian era, the aim of the lectures given in 1911 and 1912 was to explain karma as the flow of destiny and to point to its intimate workings. The lines of development running through the lectures have survived only as pictures of memory ; the transcriptions often failed to catch the threads of the logical sequence and the notes or headings jotted down and collected here and there are really no more than indications. But the direction of the spiritual impulses given by Dr. Steiner has been preserved, and justifies, maybe, the attempt at compilation. Through meditative study these impulses will be able to work in us and deepen our souls.



# I

## THE DAWN OF OCCULTISM IN THE MODERN AGE

THE lecture today will be historical in character and the day after tomorrow I shall speak of matters which will give us deeper insight into the impulses contained in the thinking, the will and the deeds of Rosicrucianism. We can only understand the work of Rosicrucianism today when we realise that it was never a model laid down once and for always but assumes a different form in every century. The reason for this is that Rosicrucianism must always adapt itself to the conditions of the times. It is quite obvious to us that the fundamental impulses of Spiritual Science must find their way into the culture of the present age ; but we know, too, that the culture of the West presents difficulties. Spiritual Science cannot make different human beings of us from one day to the next, because through our karma we have been born into Western culture. Our task is not as simple as that of the representatives of communities based upon race or the tenets of a particular religion. For our fundamental principle must be that we are not rooted in the soil of a specific creed but regard the different systems of religion as forms and variations of the one, universal spiritual life. It is the seed of spiritual truth in all religions for which Spiritual Science must seek. As a Westerner, the theosophist may very easily be misunderstood, above all by the different religious confessions and schools of thought in the world. If we

rightly understand our task as spiritual scientists we must hold fast to the principle of *historical development*, realising that Spiritual Science is an integral part of this development. Each one of you here has been incarnated in every epoch of culture—indeed more than once. What is the purpose of these reincarnations? Why must the human being pass through all these different schoolings in the periods of culture and civilisation? It was this question which brought Lessing to avow his belief in the idea of reincarnation. Lessing thought to himself: Human beings have lived through all the earlier periods of culture and they must return again and again in order to learn new things and to be able to connect the old with the new. There must be a purpose in the fact that we pass through different incarnations, and the purpose is that in each of them the human being shall add new experiences to the old.

As you have often heard, there are great differences between the successive epochs of culture. Today we shall speak in closer detail of an extremely important period: the thirteenth century. Human beings in incarnation at that time lived through an experience which has not fallen to the lot of others. What I am now about to say is known to all who have reached a certain high level of spiritual life and who are now again in incarnation.

In the thirteenth century, spiritual darkness fell for a time upon all human beings, even the most enlightened, and also upon the Initiates. Whatever knowledge of the spiritual worlds existed in the thirteenth century came from tradition or from men who in still earlier times had been Initiates and were able to call up remembrances of what they had then experienced. But for a brief space of time it was impossible even for these

men to have direct vision of the spiritual world. Darkness was obliged to fall for this short period in order that preparation might be made for the intellectual culture which was to be characteristic of our modern age. The point of importance is that we *have* this kind of culture today, in the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch. Culture in the Greek epoch was quite different. Instead of the modern, intellectual kind of thinking, *direct perception* was then the dominant faculty ; the human being was one, as it were, with what he saw and heard, even with what he thought. He did not cogitate and reason as he does today, and needs must do, for this is the task of the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch.

In the thirteenth century, it was necessary for especially suitable personalities to be chosen out for Initiation, and the Initiation itself could only take place after that brief period of darkness had come to an end. The name of the place in Europe where the happenings of which I am about to speak came to pass cannot yet be communicated, but before very long this too will be possible.

We shall speak today of the dawn of occultism in the modern age. Twelve men were living at the time of the darkness, twelve men of deep spirituality who came together in order to further the progress of humanity. They did not all of them possess the power of direct vision of the spiritual world, but they were able to bring to life within them remembrances of what they had experienced through earlier Initiation. And by the dispensation of the karma of humanity, the heritage left by the ancient culture of Atlantis was embodied in seven of these twelve men. In my book *Occult Science* it is said that the seven wise Teachers of the ancient, holy Indian civilisation bore within them the surviving wisdom of Atlantis.



The seven men were incarnated again in the thirteenth century and formed part of the Twelve ; it was they who were able to look back to the seven streams of the ancient Atlantean wisdom and to the continuations of these seven streams. The task assigned to each of these seven individualities was to make one of the seven streams of wisdom fruitful both for the culture of the thirteenth century and of our modern age. These seven individualities were joined by four others ; unlike the first seven, these other four were not able to look back to times of the primeval past ; they looked back to what mankind had acquired from occult truths during the four epochs of *post*-Atlantean culture. The first of the four looked back to the period of ancient India, the second to that of ancient Persia, the third to that of Egyptian-Chaldean-Babylonian-Assyrian culture, and the fourth to that of the Græco-Latin age. These four joined the seven in that " College " of wise men in the thirteenth century ; the twelfth had fewer remembrances ; he was more intrinsically intellectual than the rest and it was his task to cultivate and foster the external sciences. These twelve individualities did not live only in the sphere of occultism as cultivated in the West, but could also be " incorporated " as it were in men who possessed some genuine knowledge of occultism. Goethe's poem *Die Geheimnisse*\* gives a certain indication of this.—Thus there were twelve outstanding individualities and to them came a Thirteenth who, after the period of darkness had come to an end was to be chosen out for the kind of Initiation demanded by the culture of the West. The circumstances are very mysterious and I can only give you the following information in the form of a narrative. To me it is objective truth, but you

\**The Mysteries* by Rudolf Steiner.

yourselves can put it to the test by gathering together what has been said by anthroposophical Spiritual Science during the last few years, added to what you know of history since the thirteenth century.

It was known to the College of the twelve wise men that a child was to be born who had lived in Palestine at the time of Christ and had been present when the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place. This Individuality possessed great powers of heart and a quality of deep, inward love which circumstances had since helped to unfold in him. An Individuality of extraordinary spirituality was incarnated in this child. It was necessary, in this case, for a process to be enacted which will never be repeated in the same form. The following does *not* describe a typical Initiation but is an altogether exceptional happening. It was necessary for this child to be removed from the environment into which he was born and to be placed in the care of the Twelve at a certain place in Europe. But it was not the external measures adopted by the twelve wise men that are of essential importance ; what *is* important is the fact that the child grew up with the Twelve around him, and because of this, their wisdom was able to stream into him. One of the Twelve, for example, possessed the Mars-wisdom and therewith a definite quality of soul—a mood-of-soul tempered by the form of culture standing under the influence of Mars. The forces of the Mars-culture endowed this soul with the faculty, among others, of presenting the occult sciences with fiery enthusiasm and ardour. Similar planetary influences were also at work in other faculties distributed among the Twelve. The development of the child's soul proceeded harmoniously under the influences pouring from the twelve wise men. And so the child grew up, under the

unceasing care of the Twelve. Then, at a certain time, when the child had grown into a young man of about 20, he was able to give expression to something that was a kind of reflex of the twelve streams of wisdom—but in a form altogether new, new even to the twelve wise men. The metamorphosis was accompanied by violent organic changes. Even physically the child had been quite unlike other human beings ; he was often very ill and his body became transparent, as though filled with light. Then there came a time when for some days the soul departed altogether from the body. The young man lay as if dead . . . And when the soul returned it was as though the twelve streams of wisdom were born anew. He spoke of new experiences. There had come to him, from the Mystery of Golgotha, an experience similar to that of Paul before Damascus. Thereby it was possible for all the twelve world-conceptions, religious and scientific—and fundamentally there are only twelve—to be gathered together, synthesised in *one*. The twelve basic world-conceptions were gathered together into one whole which could do justice to them all. Of what was taught we shall speak the day after tomorrow. It remains now to be said that the young man died very soon afterwards. His life on Earth had been brief. His mission had been to create a synthesis of the twelve streams of wisdom in the sphere of thought and to bring forth the new impulse which he could then bequeath to the twelve wise men who were to carry it further. A great and significant impetus had been given. The name of the Individuality from whom this impulse originated was Christian Rosenkreutz. The same Individuality was born again in the fourteenth century and this earthly life lasted for more than a hundred years. In the new earthly life he brought to



fruitfulness, in the outer world too, all that he had lived through in that brief space of time. He travelled all over the West and over practically the whole of the then known world in order to receive anew the wisdom which in the previous life had quickened in him the new impulse—the impulse which, as a kind of essence, was to filter into the culture of the times.

This new impulse also came to expression in the exoteric world. The inspiration of the being of whom we have spoken, worked, for example, in Lessing. It is not, of course, possible to give external proof of this, but Lessing's whole mode and manner of thinking is such that the Rosicrucian impulse is perceptible to one who is versed in these matters. Again in the nineteenth century—an age so ill-adapted for the ideas of karma, reincarnation and the like—this impulse worked exoterically. It is an interesting fact that towards the end of the 'forties of the nineteenth century a certain scientific body offered a reward for the best philosophical treatise on the subject of the immortality of the soul. Among the treatises submitted was one by Wiedenmann, accepting the principle that the soul has many earthly lives. Naturally, this essay does not speak of reincarnation in the same way as Spiritual Science ; but it is interesting that such a writing should have appeared at that time and have been awarded the prize. And other psychologists of the day also acknowledged their belief in repeated earthly lives. The thread of belief in reincarnation and karma was never entirely broken. Moreover the early writings of the Founder of the Theosophical Society, the great H. P. Blavatsky, are explicable only when we recognise the Rosicrucian inspiration underlying them.

Now it is of the greatest importance for us to know

that whenever the Rosicrucian inspiration is given, in each century, the bearer of the inspiration is never outwardly designated as such. His identity has been known only to the very highest Initiates. Today, for example, it is only permissible to speak of happenings of a hundred years ago ; for this is the period of time which must have elapsed before they may be spoken of openly. The temptation to pay fanatical veneration to authority vested in some personality—than which there is no greater evil—would be too great for men. This danger is already too near at hand. Silence is a necessary precaution not only against the wiles of ambition and pride—which it might be possible to resist—but paramountly on account of the occult, astral attacks which would be directed all the time against such an individual. Hence the rule that these things may not be spoken of until a hundred years have elapsed. Such studies must help us to realise that the fulcrum of historical development is contained in Rosicrucianism.

By a simple comparison, let me explain to you what is meant by this.—Think of a pair of scales. There must be only *one* fulcrum, for if there were two, no weighing would be possible. One such fulcrum is also necessary in the process of historical development. Eastern world-conceptions do not admit this, nor do they recognise historical evolution in this sense ; and the same applies to Schopenhauer. But it is the task of humanity of the West to recognise the flow of history—and it is the mission of Rosicrucianism to promote a kind of thinking which admits the reality of a fulcrum or pivotal point in the flow of history. In regard to what will now be said, the religious confession to which a man may belong is of no consequence. For it can be substantiated from the Akasha Chronicle that the day which represents the



pivotal point in the evolution of mankind is the 3rd April in the year 33 A.D. Knowledge of the fact that the pivot of evolution lies at this point is an essential part of Rosicrucianism.—What was it that really happened then? *The crisis in the world of the demons!* And what does this mean?

We know that in earlier times human beings possessed the faculty of primitive clairvoyance. This clairvoyance became progressively feebler, almost to the point of extinction. The fact is that hitherto the human being had been conscious mainly in the astral body and less in the “I.” The crisis came about because of the darkening of the ancient clairvoyance. Man’s vision extended only into the lowest regions of the spiritual world. The “I” lived still in the astral world; but the beings and powers which the “I” was able to behold, deteriorated into greater and greater impurity. Man no longer had any vision of the good powers, but as he looked into the astral world he saw only these evil beings. The only means of salvation was the cultivation and development of the “I.” The beginning of this was the enactment of the baptism given by John in the Jordan. What was the experience of one thus baptised? He was first subjected to the physical process of immersion in the water which caused the separation of the astral and etheric bodies from the physical body. This enabled him to perceive that a crisis was at hand in the world of the demons. And those who had been baptised knew: We must change our hearts! The time is at hand when the Spirit is to stream directly into the “I.” Such a man felt that these terrible astral beings were within him, always penetrating into him.

A power transcending the astral was about to come into operation—the power of the “I.” Through the

“ I ” it will be possible for communities of human beings to gather together in freedom of soul, communities no longer determined by ties of blood. And now picture to yourselves a man possessed by demons of the most evil kind who know that they are facing a crisis. Picture to yourselves again that to such a man there comes One Whose mission it is to oppose the demons. What must the demons feel under such circumstances ? Ill at ease in the very highest degree ! And so indeed it was : in the presence of Christ Jesus the demons were ill at ease.

Rosicrucianism has within it the impulse by which the demons must be countered. Through this impulse the “ I ” is to be made supreme—but in this respect little progress has been achieved.

Returning to the point at which the lecture began, it is not difficult to realise that it will be harder for us as Anthroposophists to make our voice heard in the world than it will be for any others. The adherents of other views of the world will have less persecution to suffer than Anthroposophists. For nothing makes men more uneasy than to describe to them the true nature of the Christ. But our conviction is based upon the results of genuine occult science and this conviction must be sustained with all the forces of which we are capable.

## II

TODAY we will lead on from the lecture of the day before yesterday to certain matters which can promote a deep personal understanding of the anthroposophical life. If we pass over our life in review and make real efforts to get to the root of its happenings, very much can be gained. We shall recognise the justice of many things in our destiny and realise that we have deserved them.— Suppose someone has been frivolous and superficial in the present incarnation and is subsequently struck by a blow of fate. It may not be possible, externally, to connect the blow of fate directly with the frivolousness, but a feeling arises, nevertheless, that there is justice in it. Further examination of life will reveal blows of fate which we can only attribute to chance, for which we find no explanation whatever. These two categories of experiences are to be discovered as we look back over our life. Now it is important to make a clear distinction between apparent *chance* and obvious *necessity*. When a man reviews his life with reference to these two kinds of happenings, he will fail to reach any higher stage of development unless he endeavours to have a very clear perception of everything that seems to him to be chance. We must try, above all, to have clear perception of those things we have *not* desired, which go right against the grain. It is possible to induce a certain attitude of soul and to say to ourselves : How would it be if I were to take those things which I have *not* desired, which are disagreeable to me and imagine that I myself actually *willed* them ? In other words, we imagine with all



intensity that we ourselves willed our particular circumstances.

In regard to apparently fortuitous happenings, we must picture the possibility of having ourselves put forth a deliberate and strong effort of will in order to bring them about. Meditatively as it were, we must induce this attitude to happenings which, on the face of them, seem to be purely fortuitous in our lives. Every human being today is capable of this mental exercise. If we proceed in this way, a very definite impression will ultimately be made upon the soul ; we shall feel as though something were striving to be released from us. The soul says to itself : " Here, as a mental image, I have before me a second being ; he is actually there." We cannot get rid of this image and the being gradually becomes our " Double." The soul begins to feel a real connection with this being who has been imagined into existence, to realise that this being actually exists within us. If this conception deepens into a vivid and intense experience, we become aware that this " imagined " being is by no means without significance. The conviction comes to us : this being was already once in existence and at that time you had within you the impulses of will which led to the apparently chance happenings of today. Thereby we reach a deep-rooted conviction that we were already in existence before coming down into the body. Every human being today can have this conviction.—And now let us consider the question of the successive incarnations of the human being. What is it that reincarnates ? How can we discover the answer to this question ?

There are three fundamental and distinct categories of experiences in the life of soul. Firstly, our mental pictures, our ideas, our thoughts. In forming a mental

picture, our attitude may well be one of complete neutrality ; we need not love or hate what we picture inwardly, neither need we feel sympathy or antipathy towards it. Secondly, there are the moods and shades of feeling which arise by the side of the ideas or the thoughts ; the cause of these moods in the life of feeling is that we like or love one thing, dislike or abhor another, and so forth. The third kind of experiences in the life of soul are the impulses of will. There are, of course, transitional stages but speaking generally these are the three categories. Moreover it is fundamentally characteristic of a healthy life of soul to be able to keep these three kinds of experiences separate and distinct from each other. Our life of thought and mental presentation arises because we receive stimuli from outside. Nobody will find it difficult to realise that the life of thought is the most closely bound up with the present incarnation. This, after all, is quite obvious when we bear in mind that speech is the instrument whereby we express our thoughts ; and speech, or language, must, in the nature of things, differ in every incarnation. We no more bring language with us at the beginning of a new incarnation than we bring thoughts and ideas. The language as well as the thoughts must be acquired afresh in each incarnation. Hebbel once wrote something very remarkable in his diary.—The idea occurred to him that a scene in which the reincarnated Plato was being soundly chastised by the teacher for his lack of understanding of Plato would produce a very striking effect in a play ! A man does not carry over his thought and mental life from one incarnation to another and takes practically nothing of it with him into his post mortem existence. After death we evolve no thoughts or mental pictures but have direct *perceptions*, just as our

physical eyes have perceptions of colour. After death, the world of concepts is seen as a kind of net stretching across existence. But our feelings, our moods of heart and feeling—these we retain after death and also bring their forces with us as qualities and tendencies of soul into a new earthly life. For example, even if a child's life of thought is undeveloped, we shall be able to notice quite definite tendencies in his life of feeling. And because our impulses of will are linked with feelings, we also take them with us into our life after death. If, for example, a man lends himself to fallacy and error, the effect upon his life of feeling is not the same as if he lends himself to truth. For a long time after death we suffer from the consequences of false mental presentations and ideas. Our attention must therefore turn to the qualities and moods of feeling and the impulses of the will, when we ask : What is it that actually passes on from one incarnation to another ?

Suppose something painful happened to us ten or twenty years ago. In thought today we may be able to remember it quite distinctly and in detail. But the actual pain we felt at the time has all but faded away ; we cannot re-experience the stirrings of feeling and impulses of will by which it was accompanied. Think for a moment of Bismarck and the overwhelming difficulties of which he was conscious in taking his decision to go to war in 1866 ; think of what tumultuous feelings, what teeming impulses of will were working in Bismarck at that time ! But even when writing his memoirs, would Bismarck have been conscious of these emotions and resolves with anything like the same intensity ? Of course not ! Man's memory between birth and death is composed of thoughts and mental pictures. It may, of course, be that even after ten or twenty years, a feeling



of pain comes over us at the recollection of some sorrowful event, but generally speaking the pain will have greatly diminished after this lapse of time ; in thought, however, we can remember the very details of the event. If we now picture to ourselves that we actually *willed* certain painful events, that in reality we welcomed things which in our youth we may have hated, the very difficulty of this exercise rouses the soul and thus has an effect upon the life of feeling. Suppose, for example, a stone once crashed down upon us.—We now try with all intensity to picture that we ourselves willed it so. Through such mental pictures—that we ourselves have willed the chance events in our life—we arouse, in the life of feeling, memory of our earlier incarnations. In this way we begin to realise how we are rooted in the spiritual world, we begin to understand our destiny. We have brought with us, from our previous incarnation, the will for the chance events of this life.

To devote ourselves in meditation to such thoughts, and elaborate them, is of the highest importance. Between death and a new birth too, much transpires, for this period is infinitely rich in experiences—purely spiritual experiences, of course. We therefore bring with us qualities of feeling and impulses of will from the period between death and a new birth, that is to say, from the spiritual world. Upon this rests a certain occurrence of very great importance in the modern age, but one of which little notice is taken. The occurrence is to be found in the lives of many people today but usually passes by unnoticed. It is, however, the task of Anthroposophy to point to such an occurrence and its significance. Let me make it clear by an example.—Suppose a man has occasion to go somewhere or other and his path happens to take him in the wake of another human

being, a child perhaps. Suddenly the man catches sight of a yawning chasm at the edge of the path along which the child is walking. A few steps farther and the child will inevitably fall over the edge into the chasm. He runs to save the child, runs and runs, entirely forgetting about the chasm. Then he suddenly hears a voice calling out to him from somewhere : “ Stand still ! ” He halts as though nailed to the spot. At that moment the child catches hold of a tree and also stops, so that no harm befalls. If no voice had called at that moment the man must inevitably have fallen into the chasm. And now he wonders from whom the voice came. He finds no single soul who could have called, but he realises that he would quite certainly have been killed if he had not heard this voice ; yet however closely he investigates he cannot find that the warning came from any physical voice.

In deep self-observation, many human beings living at the present time would be able to recognise a similar experience in their lives. But far too little attention is paid to such things. An experience of this kind may pass by without leaving a trace—then the impression fades away and no importance is attached to the experience. But suppose a man has been attentive and realises that it was *not* without significance. The thought may then occur to him : At that point in your life you were facing a crisis, a karmic crisis ; your life should really have ended at that moment, for you had forfeited it. You were saved by something akin to chance and since then a second life has as it were been planted on the first ; this second life is to be regarded as a gift bestowed upon you and you must act accordingly. When such an experience makes a man feel that his life, from that time onwards, has been bestowed upon him as a gift, this



means that he can be accounted a follower of Christian Rosenkreutz. For this is how Christian Rosenkreutz calls the souls whom he has chosen. A man who can recall such an occurrence—and everyone sitting here can discover something of the kind in their lives if they observe closely enough—has the right to say to himself : Christian Rosenkreutz has given me a sign from the spiritual world that I belong to his stream. Christian Rosenkreutz has added such an experience to my karma. —This is the way in which Christian Rosenkreutz chooses his pupils ; this is how he gathers his community. —A man who is conscious of this experience knows with certainty that a path has been pointed out to him which he must follow, trying to discover how he can dedicate himself to the service of Rosicrucianism. If there are some who have not yet recognised the sign, they will do so later on ; for he to whom the sign has once been given will never again be free from it.—That such an experience comes to a man is due to the fact that during the period between his last death and his present birth, he was in contact with Christian Rosenkreutz in the spiritual world. It was then that Christian Rosenkreutz chose us, imparting an impulse of will which leads us, now, to such experiences. This is the way in which spiritual connections are established. Materialistic thought will naturally regard all these things as hallucinations, just as it regards the experience of Paul at Damascus as having been an hallucination. The logical conclusion to be drawn from this is that the whole of Christianity is based upon an hallucination, therefore upon error. For theologians are perfectly well aware that the Event at Damascus is the foundation-stone of the whole of subsequent Christianity. And if this foundation-stone itself is nothing but an illusion, then, if thought is

consistent, everything built upon it must obviously be fallacy.

An attempt has been made today to show that certain happenings, certain experiences in life may indicate to us how we are interwoven in the spiritual fabric of world-existence. If we develop the memory belonging to our life of feeling, we grow onwards into the spiritual life which streams and pulses through the world. Theoretical knowledge alone does not make men true theosophists ; those who understand their own life and the life of other human beings in the sense indicated today—they and they alone are true theosophists. Anthroposophy is a basic power which can transform our life of soul. And the goal of the work in our groups must be that the intimate experiences of the soul change in character, that through the gradual development of the memory belonging to the life of feeling we become aware of Immortality. The true theosophist or anthroposophist must have this conviction : If you so *will*, if you really apply the forces within you in all their strength, then you can utterly transform your character. We must learn to feel and perceive that the Immortal holds sway in ourselves and in everyone else.—What makes a man into a true anthroposophist is that his faculties remain receptive his whole life long, even when his hair is white. The realisation that progress is possible always and forever will transform our whole spiritual life.

One of the consequences of materialism is that human beings become old prematurely. Thirty years ago, for example, children looked quite different ; there are children today of 10 or 12 years old who give the impression of old and agéd people. Human beings—especially adolescents—have become so precocious, so old beyond their years. They maintain that lies such as

that of babies being brought by the stork should not be told to children, that children should be "enlightened" on such matters. Those who come after us will know that the souls of our children hover down as bird-like, spirit-forms from the higher worlds. To have an imaginative conception of many things still beyond our comprehension is of very great importance. As regards the case in question, it is possible to find a much better imaginative picture than the legend of the stork ; the reality is that spiritual forces are in play between the child and his parents or teachers ; a kind of secret magnetism is in operation. We must ourselves *believe* in any imaginative picture we give to the children. If it is a question of explaining death to them, we must point to another happening in Nature. We say to the children : " See how the butterfly flies out of the chrysalis. That is what happens to the human soul at death."—But we must ourselves believe that the Powers behind the Universe have given us, in the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, an image of the soul going forth from the body. The World-Spirit has inscribed such a picture in Nature to draw our attention to what here transpires. It is infinitely important to be always capable of learning, of always remaining young, independently of our physical body. The great task of Theosophy, or Anthroposophy, is to bring to the world the rejuvenation of which it stands sorely in need. We must get beyond the banal and the purely material. To recognise Soul and Spirit as powers operating in life—this must be the aim of the work in our Groups. More and more we must be permeated with the knowledge that the soul can gain mastery over the external world.



### III

## THE TRUE ATTITUDE TO KARMA

*Two public lectures (6th and 7th February) had been given on "Death and Immortality in the light of Spiritual Science" and "Eternal Being and the Nature of the Human Soul in the light of Spiritual Science."\**

It was not without purpose that at the end of each of the two public lectures, I emphasised that Theosophy must not be regarded merely as a theory or a science, nor even a specific form of what is usually known as a body of knowledge, but must be something that can be transformed in the soul into actual life, into an elixir of life. What really matters is that we shall not only acquire knowledge through Theosophy but that there shall flow into us, from Theosophy, forces which help us not only in ordinary physical existence but through the whole compass of life—which includes physical existence and the discarnate condition between death and a new birth. The more we feel that Theosophy bestows upon us forces whereby life itself is strengthened and enriched, the more truly we understand it.

When such a statement is made, people may ask : If Theosophy is to be a power that strengthens and infuses vigour into life, why is it necessary to absorb all this apparently theoretical knowledge ? Why must we be troubled in our group-meetings with details about the preceding planetary embodiments of the Earth ? Why is it necessary to learn about things that happen in remote ages of the past ? Why are we also expected to familiarise ourselves with the more intimate, intangible laws of reincarnation, karma and so forth ? . . . Many people may think that Theosophy is just another kind

\*Not yet published in English.

of science, on a par with the many sciences existing in outer, physical life.

Now in matters of this kind, all considerations of convenience in life must be put aside ; there must be scrupulous self-examination as to whether or not such questions are tainted by that habitual slackness in life which may all too justly be expressed by saying : Man is fundamentally unwilling to learn, unwilling to take hold of the Spiritual because this is inconvenient for him. We must ask ourselves : Does not something of this fear of inconvenience and discomfort creep into such questions ? Let us admit that we really do begin by thinking that there is an easier path to Theosophy than all that is presented, for example, in our literature ! It is often said light-heartedly that, after all, a man need only know himself, need only try to be a good and righteous human being—and then he is a sufficiently good Theosophist. Yes, my dear friends, but precisely this gives us the deeper knowledge that there is nothing more difficult than to be a good man in the real sense and that nothing needs so much preparation as the attainment of this ideal.

As to the question concerning Self-Knowledge—that can certainly not be answered in a moment, as so many people would like to think. Today, therefore, we will consider certain questions which are often expressed in the way indicated above. We will think of how Theosophy comes to us, seemingly, as a body of teaching, a science, although in essence it brings self-knowledge and the aspiration to become good and righteous men. And to this end it is important to study, from different points of view, how Theosophy can flow into *life*.

From among many pressing questions, let us take one in particular.—I am not referring to anything in the

domain of science but to a question arising in everyday existence, namely, that of consolation for suffering, for lack of satisfaction in life. How, for example, can Theosophy bring consolation to people in distress, when they need consolation? Every individual must of course apply to his particular case what may be said about such matters. In addressing a number of people one can only speak in a general sense.

Why do we need consolation in life? Because something may distress us, because we have to suffer, to undergo painful experiences. Now it is natural for a man to feel that something in him rebels against this suffering. He asks: "Why have I to bear it, why has it fallen to my lot? Could not my life have been without pain, could it not have brought me contentment?" A man who puts the question in this way can only find an answer when he understands the nature of human karma, of human destiny. Why do we suffer? And here I am referring not only to outer suffering but also to inner suffering due to a sense of failure to do ourselves justice or find our proper bearings in life. That is what I mean by inner suffering. Why does life bring so much that leaves us unsatisfied?

Study of the laws of karma will make it clear to us that something underlies our sufferings, something that can be elucidated by an example drawn from ordinary life between birth and death.—I have given this example more than once. Suppose a young man has lived up to the age of 18 or so, entirely on his father; his life has been happy and carefree; he has had everything he wanted. Then the father loses his fortune, becomes bankrupt, and the youth is obliged to set about learning something, to exert himself. Life brings him many sufferings and deprivations. It is readily understandable



that the sufferings are not at all to his liking. But now think of him at the age of 50. Because circumstances obliged him to learn something in his youth, he has turned into a decent, self-respecting human being. He has found his feet in life and can say to himself: "My attitude to the sufferings and deprivations was natural at that time; but now I think quite differently about them; I realise now that the sufferings would not have come to me if in those days I had possessed all the virtues—even the very limited virtues of a boy of 18. If no suffering had come my way I should have remained a good-for-nothing. It was the suffering that changed the imperfections into something more perfect. It is due to the suffering that I am not the same human being I was forty years ago. What was it, then, that came together within me at that time? My own imperfections and my suffering . . . and my imperfections sought out the suffering in order that they might be expunged and greater perfection attained."

—This attitude can, after all, arise from quite an ordinary view of life between birth and death. And if we think deeply about life as a whole, facing our karma in the way indicated in the lecture yesterday, we shall finally be convinced that the sufferings along our path are sought out by our own imperfections. The vast majority of sufferings are, indeed, sought out by the imperfections we have brought with us from earlier incarnations. And because of these imperfections, a wiser being within us seeks for the path leading to the sufferings. For it is a golden rule in life that as human beings we have perpetually within us a being who is much wiser, much cleverer than we. The "I" of ordinary life has far less wisdom and if faced with the alternative of seeking either pain or happiness, would certainly

choose the path to happiness. The wiser being operates in depths of the subconscious life to which ordinary consciousness does not extend. This wiser being diverts our gaze from the path to superficial happiness and kindles within us a magic power which, without our conscious knowledge, leads us towards the suffering. But what does this mean—"without our conscious knowledge?" It means that the wiser being is gaining greater mastery and this wiser being invariably acts within us in such a way as to guide our imperfections to our sufferings, allowing us to suffer because every outer and inner suffering expunges some imperfection and leads to greater perfection.

We may be willing to accept such principles in theory, but that, after all, is not of much account. A great deal is achieved, however, if in certain solemn and dedicated moments of life we try strenuously to make such principles the very life-blood of the soul. In the hurry and bustle, the work and the duties of ordinary life, this is not always possible; under these circumstances we cannot always oust the being of lesser wisdom—who is, after all, part of us. But in certain deliberately chosen moments, however short they may be, we shall be able to say to ourselves: I will turn away from the hubbub of outer life and view my sufferings in such a way that I realise how the wiser being within me has been drawn to them by a magic power, how I imposed upon myself certain pain without which I should not have overcome this or that imperfection.—A feeling of the peace inherent in wisdom will then arise, bringing the realisation that even where the world seems full of suffering, there too it is full of wisdom! This is something that Theosophy has achieved for life. We may forget it again in the affairs of external life, but if we do not forget it altogether



and repeat the exercise steadfastly, we shall find that a kind of seed has been laid in the soul and that many a darkling mood of distress or weakness will change into brightness, into a sense of vigour and strength. And then we shall have acquired from such moments, greater harmony and energy in the life of soul.

Then we may pass on to something else . . . but the Theosophist should make it a rule to devote himself to these other thoughts only when the attitude towards suffering has become alive within him. We may turn, then, to think about the happiness and joys of life. A man who adopts towards his destiny the attitude that he himself has willed his sufferings, will have a strange experience when he comes to think about his joy and happiness. It is not as easy for him here, as in the case of his sufferings. It is easy, after all, to find the consolation for suffering, and anyone who feels doubtful has only to persevere ; but it will be difficult to find the right attitude to happiness and joy. However strongly a man may bring himself to feel that he has willed his suffering—when he applies this mood-of-soul to his happiness and joy, he will not be able to avoid a sense of shame ; he will have a thorough sense of shame. And he can only rid himself of this feeling of shame by saying to himself : “ No, I have *not* earned my joy and happiness through my own karma ! ” This alone will put matters right, for otherwise the shame may be so intense that it becomes sheerly destructive in the soul. The only salvation is not to attribute our joys to the wiser being within us. This thought will convince us that we are on the right road, because the feeling of shame passes away. It is really so : happiness and joy in life are bestowed by the wise guidance of worlds without our assistance, as something we must receive as Grace, recognising always that

the purpose is to give us our place in the totality of existence. Joy and happiness should so work upon us in the secluded moments of life that we feel them as Grace, Grace bestowed by the supreme Powers of the world who want to receive us into themselves.

Whereas through pain and suffering we are thrown back upon ourselves, brought nearer to perfection, through happiness and joy we have the feeling of peaceful security in the arms of the Divine Powers of the world, and the only worthy attitude is one of thankfulness. Nobody who in quiet hours of self-contemplation ascribes happiness and joy to his own karma, will unfold the right attitude to such experiences. If he ascribes joy and happiness to his karma, he is succumbing to a fallacy whereby the Spiritual within him is weakened and paralysed ; the slightest thought that happiness or delight have been deserved, weakens and cripples us inwardly. These words may seem harsh, for many a man, when he attributes suffering to his own will and individuality, will resolve to be master of himself, too, in experiences of happiness and joy. But even a cursory glance at life will indicate that by their very nature, joy and happiness tend to obliterate something in us. This weakening effect of delights and joys in life is graphically described by the lines in *Faust* : “ And so from longing to delight I reel ; and even in delight I pine for longing.” Anybody who gives a single thought to the influence of joy, taken in the personal sense, will realise that there is something in joy which tends to produce a kind of intoxication in life and obliterates the Self.

This is not meant to be a sermon against joy or a suggestion that it would be good to torture ourselves with red-hot pincers or something of the kind. Indeed it is not so ! To recognise something for what it truly is,

does not mean that we must flee from it. It is not a question of fleeing from joy, but of receiving it calmly and tranquilly whenever and in whatever form it comes to us ; we must learn to feel it as Grace and the more we do so, the better, for thereby we enter more deeply into the Divine. These words are spoken, then, not in order to preach asceticism but to awaken the right attitude of soul to happiness and joy.

If anyone were to say : Joy and happiness have a weakening, deadening effect, therefore I will flee from them (which is the attitude of false ascetism and forms of self-torture)—such a man would be fleeing from the Grace bestowed upon him by the Gods. And in truth the self-torture practised by the ascetics and monks in olden days was a form of resistance against the Gods. We must learn to regard suffering as something brought by our karma and to feel happiness as Grace breathed down to us by the Divine. Joy and happiness should be to us the sign of how closely the Gods have drawn us to themselves ; suffering and pain should be the sign of how remote we are from the goal before us as intelligent human beings. Such is the true attitude to karma and without it we shall make no real progress in life. Whenever the world vouchsafes to us the good and the beautiful, we must feel that behind this world stand those Powers of whom the Bible says : “And they saw that it [the world] was good.” But in our experiences of pain and suffering we must recognise what, in the course of incarnations, man has made of the world which in the beginning was good and what he must amend by educating himself to resolute endurance of these sufferings.

I have been speaking merely of two ways of accepting karma. From one aspect, our karma consists of suffering and happiness ; and we accept our karma with the right



kind of will—as if we ourselves have willed it—when we adopt the true attitude to the suffering and the happiness that come our way. But we can do still more.—And this will be the theme of the lectures today and tomorrow.

Karma does not reveal itself only in the form of experiences of suffering or joy. As our life runs its course we encounter—in a way that can only be regarded as karmic—many human beings with whom, for example, we make a fleeting acquaintance, others who as relatives or close friends are connected with us for a considerable period of our life. We meet human beings who in our dealings with them bring sufferings and hindrances along our path ; or again we meet others who give us the greatest help. The relationships are manifold. We must regard these circumstances too as having been brought about by the will of the wiser being within us—the will, for example, to meet a human being who seems to run across our path accidentally and with whom we have something to adjust or settle in life. What is it that makes the wiser being in us wish to meet this particular person ? The only intelligent line of thought is that we want to come across him because we have done so before in an earlier life and our relationship had already then begun. Nor need the beginning have been in the immediately preceding life—it may have been very much earlier. Because in a past life we have had dealings of some kind with this man, because we may have been in some way indebted to him, we are led to him again by the wiser being within us, as it were by magic.

Here, of course, we enter a many-sided and extremely complicated domain, of which it is only possible to speak in general terms. But all the indications here given are the actual results of clairvoyant investigation. The indications will be useful to every individual because

he will be able to particularise and apply what is said to his own life.—A remarkable fact comes to light. About the middle of life the ascending curve passes over into the descending curve. This is the time when the forces of youth are spent and we pass over a certain zenith to the descending curve. This point of time—which occurs in the thirties—cannot be laid down with absolute finality, but the principle holds good for everyone. It is the period of life when we live most intensely on the physical plane. In this connection we may easily be deluded. It will be clear that life as it was *before* this point of time has been a process of bringing out what we have brought with us into the present incarnation. This process has been going on since childhood, although it is less marked as the years go by. We have chiselled out our life, have been nourished as it were by the forces brought from the spiritual world. These forces, however, are spent by the point of time indicated above. Observation of the descending line of life reveals that we now proceed to harvest and work over what has been learned in the school of life, in order to carry it with us into the next incarnation. This is something we take *into* the spiritual world ; in the earlier period we were taking something *from* the spiritual world. It is in the middle period that we are most deeply involved in the physical world, most engrossed in the affairs of outer life. We have passed through our apprenticeship as it were and are in direct contact with the world ; we have our life in our own hands. At this period we are taken up with ourselves, concerned more closely than at any other time with our own external affairs and with our relation to the outer world. But this relation to the world is created by the intellect and the impulses of will which derive from the intellect—in other words, those elements

of our being which are most alien to the spiritual worlds, to which the spiritual worlds remain closed. In the middle of life we are, as it were, farthest away from the Spiritual.

A certain striking fact presents itself to occult research. Investigation of the kind of encounters and acquaintanceships with other human beings that arise in the middle of life shows, curiously, that these are the persons with whom, in the previous or in a still earlier incarnation, a man was together at the beginning of his life, in his very earliest childhood. The fact has emerged that in the middle of life—as a rule it is so, but not always—a man encounters, through circumstances of external karma, those persons who in an earlier life were his parents ; it is very rarely indeed that we are brought together in earliest childhood with those who were previously our parents ; we meet them in the middle period of life. This certainly seems strange, but it is the case, and a very great deal is gained for life if we will only try to put such a general rule to the test and adjust our thoughts accordingly. When a human being—let us say, about the age of 30—enters into some relationship with another . . . perhaps he falls in love, makes great friends, quarrels, or has some different kind of contact, a great deal will become comprehensible if, quite tentatively to begin with, he thinks about the possibility of the relationship to this person once having been that of child and parent. Conversely, this very remarkable fact comes to light.—Those human beings with whom we were together in earliest childhood—parents, brothers and sisters, playmates or others around us during early childhood—they, as a rule, are persons with whom in a previous incarnation we formed some kind of acquaintanceship when we were about 30 or so ; in very many



cases it is found that these persons are our parents or brothers and sisters in the present incarnation. Curious as this may seem, let us only try to see how the principle squares with our own life and we shall discover how much more understandable many things become. Even if the facts are otherwise, an experimental mistake will not amount to anything very serious. Contemplation of life during hours of quiet seclusion infuses it with meaning and brings rich reward ; but no attempt must ever be made to arrange life according to our own predilections. We must not deliberately go in search of people who may happen to be congenial to us, whom we should have welcomed as parents. Preconceptions and predilections must never be allowed to give rise to illusions. You will realise that a real danger lies here. Countless preconceptions lurk within us but in these difficult matters it is a very healthy exercise to try to get rid of them.

You may ask me : What is there to be said about the descending curve of life ? The striking fact has emerged that at the beginning of life we meet those human beings with whom in a previous incarnation we were connected in the middle period of life ; further, that in the middle of the present life, we revive acquaintanceships which existed at the beginning of a preceding life. And now, what of the descending curve of life ? During that period we are led to persons who may also, possibly, have had something to do with us in an earlier incarnation. They may, in that earlier incarnation, have played a part in happenings of the kind that so frequently occur at a decisive point in life—let us say, trials and sufferings caused by bitter disillusionments. In the second half of life we may again be brought into contact with persons who in some way or other were already connected with

us ; this meeting brings about a shifting of circumstances and much that was set in motion in the earlier life is cleared up and settled. These things are diverse and complex and indicate that we should not adhere rigidly to any hard and fast pattern. This much, however, may be said.—The nature of the karma that has been woven with those who come across our path especially in the second half of life, is such that it cannot be absolved in *one* life. Suppose, for example, we have caused suffering to a human being in one life ; the thought may come easily that in a subsequent life we shall be led to this person by the “ wiser being ” within us, so that we may make amends for what we have done to him. The circumstances of life, however, may not enable compensation to be made for *everything*—but often only for a part. This necessitates the operation of complicated factors which enable such surviving remnants of karma to be adjusted and settled during the second half of life.

This conception of karma can shed light upon our dealings and companionship with other human beings.

But there is still something else in the course of our karma to consider—something that in the two public lectures was referred to as the process of ripening, the acquisition of a real knowledge of life (if the phrase does not promote arrogance, it may be used). It is well to consider *how* we grow wiser. We can become wiser through our faults and mistakes and this is something for which we can only be thankful. In one and the same life it is not often that we have the opportunity of applying the wisdom gained from our mistakes and it therefore remains with us as potential power for a later life. But the wisdom, the real knowledge of life that we may acquire—what is it, in reality? I said yesterday that

we cannot carry our thoughts and ideas directly with us from one life into the other ; I said that Plato himself could not have taken his ideas directly with him into a later incarnation. What we carry over with us takes the form of will, of feeling, and in reality our thoughts and ideas, just like our mother-tongue, come as something *new* in each life. For most of the thoughts and ideas are contained in the mother-tongue, whence we acquire them. This life between birth and death yields us thoughts and ideas which really always originate from that same incarnation. Yes, but if this is so, we shall have to say to ourselves that it depends upon our karma ! —However many incarnations we pass through, the ideas that arise in us are always dependent upon the one incarnation as apart from the others. Whatever wisdom may be living in your thoughts and ideas has been absorbed from outside, it is dependent upon your karma. Very much lies in these words for they indicate that whatever we may know in life, whatever knowledge we may amass, is something entirely personal, that we can never transcend the personal by means of what we acquire for ourselves in life. In ordinary life we never reach the level of the “ wiser being ” but always remain at that of the less wise. Anyone who flatters himself that he can learn more of his higher Self from what he acquires in the world, is harbouring an illusion for the sake of convenience. This actually means that we can gain no knowledge of our higher Self from what we acquire in life. Very well, then, how are we to attain any knowledge of the higher Self? We must ask ourselves quite frankly : To what does our knowledge really amount? It amounts to what we have acquired from experience—that and nothing more, to begin with. A man who aspires to Self-Knowledge without realising



that his soul is only a mirror in which the outer world is reflected, may persuade himself that by penetrating within his own being he can find the higher Self ; certainly he will find something, but it is only what has come into him from outside. Along this cheap, easy-going path no headway can be made. Rather we must ask about those other worlds where in truth the higher Self abides and the only available teachings here are those contained in Theosophy, for example, concerning the different incarnations of the Earth and the like. Just as we inquire about the environment of a child, about what is around the child, we must ask the same questions concerning the higher Self. Theosophy teaches us of the worlds to which the higher Self belongs, through telling us of Saturn and its secrets, of the Moon, of the evolution of the Earth, of Reincarnation and Karma, of Devachan, Kamaloka and so forth. By such teachings alone we can learn about the *higher Self*, about the Self which transcends the physical plane. And anyone who refuses to study these secrets is merely pandering to his own ease. For such a soul is always whispering : “ Look within yourself—*there* you will find the Divine Man.” And what does such a man find ? In reality nothing but experiences which have been gleaned from the outer world and then deposited within him ! We find the Divine Man only when we seek for what is mirrored into this earthly world from realms outside and beyond it. Things which may sometimes be difficult and uncomfortable—*they* are true Self-Knowledge, true Theosophy ! From Theosophy we receive illumination concerning the Self—our own higher Self. For where, in reality, is the Self ? Is the Self within our skin ? No, the Self is outpoured over the world ; everything that is and has been in the world is part and parcel of the Self.

We learn to know the Self only when we learn to know the world.

These apparent theories are, in truth, the ways to Self-Knowledge ! A man who thinks he can find the Self by delving into his inner life and anchoring there, whispers to himself : “ You must be a good and righteous man, you must be selfless ! ” . . . Well and good, but it is often very obvious that such a man is becoming more and more egotistical. On the other hand, a man who wrestles with the great secrets of existence, who tears himself away from the wheedlings of the personal self and rises to what abides and can be found in the higher worlds—such a man is led to the true Self-Knowledge. When we think deeply about Saturn, Sun, Moon, we lose ourselves in cosmic Thought.—“ Cosmic thoughts are living in thy thinking ”—so says a soul who thinks in the sense of Theosophy ; and he adds : “ Lose thyself in cosmic thoughts.” The soul in whom Theosophy has become creative power, says : “ In thy feeling, cosmic powers are weaving ”—adding : “ Experience thyself through cosmic powers.” . . . not through powers which wheedle and cajole. This experience will not come to a man who closes his eyes, saying : “ I want to be good and righteous.” It will come only to the man who opens his eyes of Spirit and sees the Powers of yonder worlds mightily at work, realising that he is embedded in these cosmic Powers. And the soul who gathers strength from Theosophy says : “ In thy willing, cosmic Beings work,” adding : “ Create thyself anew from powers of will ! ” In a man who has *this* conception of Self-Knowledge, transformation is wrought—through the might of cosmic realities.

Dry and abstract as this may seem, in truth it is no theory but something that thrives and grows like a seed

of corn sown in the Earth. Forces shoot out in every direction and become plant or tree. So indeed it is.—The feelings that come to us in Spiritual Science give us the power to create ourselves anew. “Create thyself anew from power of will!” Thus does Theosophy become the elixir of life and our gaze extends over the worlds of Spirit ; forces pour into us from these worlds ; we receive their forces and know ourselves, then, in all the depths of our being. Not until we bear World-Knowledge within us can we pass, step by step, away from the being of lesser wisdom within us, the being who is separated from the Guardian of the Threshold, to the “wiser being.” We penetrate through all that is concealed from one who does not yet desire the real strength but to which he *can* be led through Theosophy.



## IV

### INTIMATE WORKINGS OF KARMA

THERE was one point in the lecture yesterday upon which I should not like misunderstanding to arise, but a conversation I had today indicated that this might be possible. It is, of course, difficult to formulate in words, matters connected with the more intimate workings of karma and one point or another may well not be quite clear at the first time of hearing. In the lecture yesterday it was said that we have to regard our sufferings as having been sought out by the "wiser being" within us in order that certain imperfections may be overcome, and that by bearing these sufferings calmly we may make progress along our path. That, however, was not the point on which misunderstanding might occur.—It was the other point, namely, that happiness and joy must not be regarded as due to our own merit or individual karma, but deemed a kind of Grace whereby we are interwoven with the all-prevailing Spirit. Please do not think that the emphasis here lies in the fact that joy comes to us as a mark of favour from the Divine-Spiritual Powers ; the emphasis lies in the fact that these experiences are made possible through *Grace*. That is what our attitude must be if we are to reach a true understanding of our karma. Happiness and joy are acts of Grace. A man who imagines that the happiness and joy in his karma indicate a desire on the part of the Gods to single him out and place him above others, will never achieve this goal. We must never imagine that happiness is vouchsafed as a mark of favour or distinction but rather as a reason for feeling that we have been recipients

of the Grace outpoured by the Divine-Spiritual Beings. It is this realisation of Grace which makes progress possible ; the other attitude would throw us back in our development. Nobody should ever believe that joy comes to him because of special merit in his karma ; far rather he should believe that joy comes to him without such merit. Joy and happiness should move us to deeds of compassion and mercy—which we shall perform more effectively than if we are suffering the pangs of sorrow. The realisation that we must make ourselves *worthy* of Grace—that is what brings us forward. There is no justification for the very prevalent view that one whose life abounds with happiness, has deserved it. This is the very attitude that must be avoided. Please, then, take this as an indication, in order that no misunderstanding may arise.

Today we will amplify our study of karma and of certain experiences in the world, to the end that Spiritual Science may become a real life-force within us. Observation of life and its happenings will reveal, to begin with, experiences of two kinds. On the one hand we shall say to ourselves : “ Yes, there a misfortune befell me, but thinking about this misfortune, I can see that it would not have come my way if I had not been careless or negligent.” This realisation, however, will not always be within the power of the ordinary consciousness ; many a time we shall find it impossible to see any connection between the misfortune and the circumstances of our present life. With respect to much that befalls us, ordinary consciousness can only conclude that it was pure chance, unconnected with anything else. It will also be possible to make this distinction in respect of undertakings which may either be successful or the reverse. In many cases we shall realise that failure was

inevitable because of laziness, inattentiveness, or something of the kind, on our part ; but in many others we shall be quite unable to discover any connection. It is a useful exercise to take stock of our own experiences and distinguish between things which have failed through no fault of our own, and others where we shall ask with surprise : How could they possibly have succeeded ?

We will try to get to the bottom of all these matters, and of events which, on the face of them, seem to be pure chance, without apparent cause. We shall therefore be considering fortuitous events and achievements seemingly unrelated to our actual faculties.

We will proceed in rather a curious way.—As an experiment, we will imagine that we ourselves have *willed* whatever may have happened to us. Suppose a loose tile from the roof of a house once crashed down upon us. We will picture, purely by way of experiment, that this did *not* happen by chance, and we will deliberately work on the idea that we ourselves climbed on that roof, loosened the tile and then ran down so quickly that we arrived simultaneously at the same spot as the falling tile ! Again we will imagine that we ourselves have been responsible, deliberately responsible, for contracting, say, a chill for which there has been no perceptible cause . . . rather like the case of the unfortunate lady who, being discontented with her lot, deliberately provoked a chill and died of it ! In this way, therefore, we imagine that things otherwise attributable to chance have been deliberately and carefully planned by ourselves. And we will also apply the same procedure to matters which are obviously dependent upon the faculties and qualities we happen to possess. If, for example, we have missed a train we particularly wanted to catch,



we shall not blame external circumstances but picture to ourselves that it was due to our own slackness. If we think this out by way of experiment, we shall gradually succeed in creating a kind of being in imagination—a very curious being, who was responsible for all these things, for a stone having crashed upon us, for some illness, and so forth. We shall realise, of course, that this being is not we ourselves ; we simply picture such a being vividly and distinctly. And then a strange experience will be associated with this being. We shall realise that he is a creation of pure phantasy, but that we cannot liberate ourselves from him or from the thought of him—and strange to say, he does not remain as he was ; although he becomes alive in us, changes his nature in us, nevertheless the impression is that he is actually present. More and more the certainty arises that *we ourselves* have had something to do with the things thus built up in imagination. There is no suggestion whatever that we once actually did them ; but such thoughts do, nevertheless, correspond, in a *certain way* with something we ourselves have done. We shall say to ourselves : “ I have done this or that and I am having now, for some reason or other, to suffer the consequences.” This is a very good exercise for unfolding in the life of feeling a kind of memory of earlier incarnations. The soul seems to feel : I myself was there and prepared these things myself.

You will readily understand that it is not easy to awaken remembrance of previous incarnations. For just think what mental effort is required to recall something even recently forgotten ; genuine mental effort is required. Experiences which occurred in earlier incarnations have passed into the depths of forgetfulness and a great deal must come to the assistance of memory,

if they are to be recollected ! One exercise has now been described. Besides what was said in the public lectures, let it be added here that a man will notice this kind of memory arising in his life of feeling : in former time, you yourself made preparation for this or that ! The principles indicated should not be ignored for if we obey them we shall find that more and more light will be shed upon life and that strength will constantly increase. Once the feeling has arisen that we ourselves were present, with our own acts, we shall have quite a different attitude to events confronting us in the future ; our whole life of feeling will be transformed. Whereas formerly we may have felt anxiety or fear when something has happened to us, we now have a kind of inner remembrance. When something comes as a shock, our feeling tells us that it is for a purpose. And that is a kind of remembrance of an earlier incarnation ! Life becomes much more tranquil, more intelligible, and that is what men need—not only those who are filled with the longing for Theosophy, but those too who stand outside. There is no sort of validity in the question people so often ask : How can earlier incarnations matter, since we do not remember them ? The right attitude towards earthly existence will certainly awaken remembrance, only it is a memory belonging to the heart, to the life of feeling, that must be developed—not the kind of memory that is composed of thoughts and concepts.

I considered it important, during this particular visit, to bring home to you how much can be put into practical application and how Theosophy can become actual *experience* in those who pursue it actively.

Now besides what accrued in earlier incarnations, other factors too are of importance in a man's karma. For life also continues between death and a new birth

and is, moreover, fraught with happenings and experiences during that period ; the consequences of these experiences in the spiritual world appear in our earthly life—but in a peculiar form which often makes us inclined to attribute such occurrences to chance. Nevertheless they can be traced to significant experiences in the spiritual world.

I want to speak to you today of something which may seem remote from the first part of the lecture. But you will see that it is important for every human being and that seemingly chance occurrences may be deeply indicative of mysterious connecting-threads in life.

I am now going to speak of an historical fact that is not preserved in history books but in the Akasha Chronicle. To begin with I remind you that the souls of all of us have been incarnated many times in earthly bodies, among the most diverse conditions of life, in ancient India, Persia, Egypt and Greece ; again and again our eyes have looked out upon different environments and conditions of existence and there is purpose and meaning in the fact that we pass through one incarnation after another. Our present life could not be as it is if we had not lived through these other conditions. A strange experience fell to the lot of men living in the thirteenth century of our era, for very exceptional conditions broke in upon humanity at that time—roughly speaking not quite 700 years ago. Conditions were such that the souls of men were completely shut off from the spiritual world ; spiritual darkness prevailed and it was impossible even for highly developed individuals to achieve direct contact with the spiritual world. In the thirteenth century, even those who in earlier incarnations had been Initiates were unable to look into the spiritual world. The gates of the spiritual world were closed for a certain period



during that century and although men who in former times had received Initiation were able to call up remembrances of their earlier incarnations, in the thirteenth century they could not themselves gaze into the spiritual worlds. It was necessary for men to live through that condition of darkness, to find the gates to the spiritual world closed against them. Men of high spiritual development were, of course, also in incarnation at that time, but they too were obliged to experience the condition of darkness. When about the middle of the thirteenth century, the darkness lifted, strange happenings transpired at a certain place in Europe—the name cannot now be given but sometime it may be possible to communicate it in a Group lecture. Twelve men in Europe of great and outstanding wisdom, whose spiritual development had taken an unusual course, emerged from the condition of twilight that had obscured clairvoyant vision. Of these twelve wise men, seven, to begin with, must be distinguished. Remembrance of their earlier Initiations had remained in these seven men, and this remembrance, together with the knowledge still surviving was such that the seven men recapitulated in themselves conditions they had once lived through in the period following the Atlantean catastrophe—the ancient Indian epoch of culture. The teachings given by the seven holy Rishis of India had come to life again in the souls of these seven wise men of Europe ; seven rays of the ancient wisdom of the sacred Atlantean culture shone forth in the hearts of these seven men who through the operations of world-karma had gathered at a certain place in Europe in the thirteenth century and had found one another again. To these seven came four others. In the soul of the first of these four, the wisdom belonging to the ancient Indian culture shone forth—

he was the eighth among the twelve. The wisdom of the ancient Persian culture lived in the soul of the ninth ; the wisdom of the third period—that of Egyptian-Chaldean culture—lived in the soul of the tenth, and the wisdom of Graeco-Latin culture in the soul of the eleventh. The wisdom of culture as it was in that particular age—the *contemporary* wisdom—lived in the soul of the twelfth. In these twelve men who came together to perform a special mission, the twelve different streams in the spiritual development of mankind were represented. The fact that all true religions and all true philosophies belong to twelve basic types is in itself a mystery. Buddhism, Brahmanism, Vedanta philosophy, materialism, or whatever it be—all of them can be traced to the twelve basic types ; it is only a matter of setting to work with precision and accuracy. And so all the different streams of man's spiritual life—the religions, the philosophies and conceptions of the world spread over the Earth—were united in that " College " of the Twelve.

After the period of darkness had passed and spiritual achievement was possible again, a Thirteenth came, in remarkable circumstances, to the Twelve. I am telling you now of one of those events which transpire secretly in the evolution of mankind once and once only. They cannot occur a second time and are mentioned not as a hint that efforts should be made to repeat them but for quite other reasons. When the darkness had lifted and it was possible again to unfold clairvoyant vision, the coming of the Thirteenth was announced in a mysterious way to the twelve wise men. They knew : a child with significant and remarkable incarnations behind him is now to be born. They knew that one of his incarnations had been at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha. It was

known, therefore, that one who had been a contemporary of the Events in Palestine was returning.—The birth of the child in these unusual circumstances during the thirteenth century could not have been said to be that of an individuality of renown.—In speaking of previous lives there is a deplorable and only too widespread tendency to go back to important historical personages. I have come across all kinds of people who believe that they were incarnated as some historical personage or figure in the Gospels. Only recently a lady informed me that she had been Mary Magdalene and I could only reply that she was the twenty-fourth Mary Magdalene I had met during my life ! In these matters the most scrupulous care must be taken to prevent fantastic notions arising.

History tells us very little about the incarnations of the Thirteenth. He was born many times, with great and profound qualities of heart. It was known that this Individuality was to be born again as a child and that he was destined for a very special mission. This knowledge was revealed to the twelve seers who took the child entirely into their charge and were able to arrange that from the very beginning he was shut off from the outside world. He was removed from his family and cared for by these twelve men. Guided by their clairvoyance, they reared the child with every care, in such a way that all the forces acquired from previous incarnations were able to unfold in him. A kind of intuitive perception of this occurrence has arisen in men who know something of the history of spiritual life. Goethe's poem *Die Geheimnisse*\* has been recited to us many times. Out of a deep, intuitive perception, Goethe speaks in

\*See : *The Mysteries : A Christmas and Easter poem by Goethe.* English translation of lecture given by Rudolf Steiner in Cologne, 25. XII. 07. (Includes translation of Goethe's poem.) Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, London.



that poem of the College of the Twelve and has been able to convey to us the mood of heart and feeling in which they lived. The Thirteenth is not "Brother Mark," but the child of whom I have been telling you and who almost immediately after his birth was taken into the care of the Twelve and brought up by them until the age of early manhood. The child developed in a strange and remarkable way. The Twelve were not in any sense fanatics ; they were full of inner composure, enlightenment and peacefulness of heart. How does a fanatic behave ? He wants to convert people as quickly as possible—while they, as a rule, do not want to be converted. Everybody is expected immediately to believe what the fanatic wants them to believe and he is angry when this does not happen. In our day, when someone sets out to expound a particular subject, people simply do not believe that his aim may be *not* to voice his *own* views but something quite different, namely, the thoughts and opinions of the *one of whom he is writing*. For many years I was held to be a follower of Nietzsche because I once wrote an absolutely objective book about him. People simply cannot understand that the aim of a writer may be to give an objective exposition. They think that everyone must be a fanatic on the subject of which he happens to be speaking !

The Twelve in the thirteenth century were far from being fanatics ; they were very sparing with teaching clothed in words but because they lived in communion with the boy, twelve rays of light as it were went out of them into him and were resolved, in his soul, into one great harmony. It would not have been possible to give him any kind of academic examination ; nevertheless there lived within him, transmuted into feeling and sensitive perception, all that the twelve representatives

of the twelve different types of religion poured into his soul. His whole soul echoed back the harmony of the twelve different forms of belief spread over the Earth. In this way the soul of the boy had very much to bear and worked in a strange way upon the body. And it is precisely for this reason that the process of which I am telling you now may not be repeated : it could only be enacted at that particular time. Strangely enough, as the harmony within the boy's soul increased, the more delicate his body became—more and more delicate, until at a certain age of life it was transparent in every limb. The boy ate less and less until finally he took no nourishment at all. Then he lay for days in a condition of complete torpor : the soul had left the body, but returned after a few days. The youth was now inwardly quite changed. The twelve different rays of the mind of humanity were united in a single radiance and he gave utterance to the greatest, most wonderful secrets ; he did not repeat what the first, or the second, or the third had said, but gave forth in a new and wonderful synthesis, all that they would have said had they spoken in unison ; all the knowledge they possessed was gathered into one whole and when voiced by the Thirteenth this new wisdom seemed actually to have come to birth in him. It was as though a higher Spirit were speaking in him. Something entirely and essentially new was thus imparted to the twelve wise men. Wisdom in abundance was imparted to them, and to each individually, greater illumination of what had been known to him hitherto.

I have been describing to you the first School of Christian Rosenkreutz, for the Thirteenth is the Individuality known to us by that name. In that incarnation he died after only a brief earthly existence ; in the

fourteenth century he was born again and lived, then, for more than a hundred years. Thus in the thirteenth century his life was brief, in the fourteenth century, very long. During the first half of this later incarnation he went on great journeys in search of the different centres of culture in Europe, Africa and Asia, in order to gather knowledge of what had come to life in him during the previous century ; then he returned to Europe. A few of those who had brought him up in the thirteenth century were again in incarnation and were joined by others. This was the time of the inauguration of the Rosicrucian stream of spiritual life. And Christian Rosenkreutz himself incarnated again and again.

To this very day he is at work—during the brief intervals, too, when he is not actually in incarnation ; through his higher bodies he then works spiritually into human beings, without the need of spatial contact. We must try to picture the mysterious way in which his influence operates.

And here I want to begin by giving a certain example. Those who participate consciously in the happenings of the occult, spiritual life outspread around us, had a strange experience from the 'eighties on into the 'nineties of last century ; one became aware of certain influences which emanated from a remarkable personality (I am only mentioning one case among many). There was, however, something not quite harmonious about these influences. Anyone who is sensitive to influences from contemporaries living far away in space would, at that time, have been aware of a certain radiance emanating from a certain personality, but a radiance not altogether harmonious. When the new century had dawned, however, these influences resolved into harmony. What had happened ? I will now explain it to you.



On 12th August, in the year 1900, *Solowioff* had died—a man far too little appreciated or understood. The influences of his ether-body radiated far and wide, but although *Solowioff* was a great philosopher, in his case the development of the *soul* was in advance of that of the *head*, the *intellect* ; he was a great and splendid thinker but his conscious philosophy was of far less importance and value than what he bore within his soul : to the very time of his death the head was a factor of hindrance and so, as an occult influence, a lack of harmony was perceptible. When *Solowioff* was dead and the ether-body, separated from the head was able to radiate more freely in the ether-world, when he was liberated from the restrictions caused by his own thinking, the rays of his influence shone out with wonderful brilliance and power.

People may ask : How can such knowledge really concern us ? This very question is illusion, for the human being is through and through a product of the spiritual processes around him ; and when certain occultists become aware of the *reality* of these processes, that is because they actually see them. But spiritual processes operate, too, in others who do *not* see.—Everything in the spiritual world is interconnected. Whatever influence may radiate from a highly developed Frenchman or Russian is felt not only on their own native soil, but their thought and influence has an effect over the *whole* Earth. Everything that comes to pass in the spiritual world has an influence upon us and only when we realise that the soul lives in the spiritual world just as the lung within the air, shall we have the right attitude !

The forces in the ether-bodies of highly developed Individualities stream out and have a potent effect upon other human beings. The ether-body of Christian

of this event which is so intimately connected with our spiritual Movement.

Such a happening surely indicates that quite a different attitude must take root in us if we want to have a clear vision of what actually plays into life. Most human beings rush hectically through life and are not thoughtful or attentive ; many say that one should not brood but engage in a life of action. But how much better it would be if precipitate deeds were left undone and people were to brood a little—their deeds, then, would be far more mature ! If only the beckoning call were heeded with composure and attentiveness ! Often it only *seems* as if we were brooding. It is precisely through quiet composure that strength comes to us—and then we shall follow when karma calls, understanding too, *when* it is calling. These are the things to which I wanted to call your attention today, for they do indeed make life more intelligible.

I have told you of the strange event in the thirteenth century, purely in the form of historical narrative, in order to indicate those things to which men must pay attention if they are to find their proper place in life and understand the beckoning call of Christian Rosenkreutz. To make this possible the preparation by the Twelve and the coming of the Thirteenth were necessary. The event in the thirteenth century was necessary in order that in our own time and hereafter, such a beckoning or other sign may be understood and obeyed. Christian Rosenkreutz has created this sign in order to rouse the attention of men to the demands of the times, to indicate to them that they belong to him and may dedicate their lives to him in the service of the progress of humanity.

On 12th August, in the year 1900, *Solowioff* had died—a man far too little appreciated or understood. The influences of his ether-body radiated far and wide, but although *Solowioff* was a great philosopher, in his case the development of the *soul* was in advance of that of the *head*, the *intellect* ; he was a great and splendid thinker but his conscious philosophy was of far less importance and value than what he bore within his soul : to the very time of his death the head was a factor of hindrance and so, as an occult influence, a lack of harmony was perceptible. When *Solowioff* was dead and the ether-body, separated from the head was able to radiate more freely in the ether-world, when he was liberated from the restrictions caused by his own thinking, the rays of his influence shone out with wonderful brilliance and power.

People may ask : How can such knowledge really concern us ? This very question is illusion, for the human being is through and through a product of the spiritual processes around him ; and when certain occultists become aware of the *reality* of these processes, that is because they actually see them. But spiritual processes operate, too, in others who do *not* see.—Everything in the spiritual world is interconnected. Whatever influence may radiate from a highly developed Frenchman or Russian is felt not only on their own native soil, but their thought and influence has an effect over the *whole* Earth. Everything that comes to pass in the spiritual world has an influence upon us and only when we realise that the soul lives in the spiritual world just as the lung within the air, shall we have the right attitude !

The forces in the ether-bodies of highly developed Individualities stream out and have a potent effect upon other human beings. The ether-body of Christian



Rosenkreutz, too, works far and wide into the world. And reference must here be made to a fact that is of the greatest significance in many human lives ; it is something that transpires in the spiritual world between death and a new birth and is not to be ascribed to " chance."

Christian Rosenkreutz has always made use of the short intervals of time between his incarnations to call into his particular stream of spiritual life those souls whom he knows to be ripe ; between his deaths and births he has concerned himself, as it were, with choosing out those who are ready to enter his stream. But human beings themselves, by learning to be attentive, must be able to recognise by what means Christian Rosenkreutz gives them a sign that they may count themselves among his chosen. This sign has been given in the lives of very many human beings of the present time, but they pay no heed to it. Yet among the apparently " chance " happenings in a man's life there may be such a sign—it is to be regarded as an indication that between death and a new birth Christian Rosenkreutz has found him mature and ready ; the sign is, however, given by Christian Rosenkreutz on the physical plane. This event may be called the mark of Christian Rosenkreutz. Let us suppose that a man is lying in bed . . . in other places I have mentioned different forms of such a happening but all of them have occurred . . . for some unaccountable reason he suddenly wakes up and as though guided by instinct looks at a wall otherwise quite dark ; in the half-light of the room. He sees, written on the wall : " Get up now, this minute ! " It all seems very strange, but he gets up and goes out of the house ; hardly has he done so than the ceiling over his bed collapses ; although nobody else would have been in danger of injury, he

himself must inevitably have been killed. The most thorough investigation proves that no single being on the physical plane warned him to get up from the bed ! If he had remained lying there, he would certainly be dead.—Such an experience may be thought to be hallucination, or something of the kind ; but deeper investigation will reveal that these particular experiences—and they come to hundreds of people—are not accidental. A beckoning call has come from Christian Rosenkreutz. The karma of the one called in this way always indicates that Christian Rosenkreutz *bestows* the life he may claim. I say explicitly : such experiences occur in the lives of many people at the present time, and it is only a question of being alert. The occurrence does not always take such a graphic form as the example quoted, but numbers of human beings nowadays have had such experiences.

Now when I say something more than once during a lecture, I do so quite deliberately, because I find that strange conclusions are apt to be drawn from things that are half—or totally forgotten. I say this because nobody need be discouraged because he has had no such experience ; this need not really be the case, for if he searches he *will* find something of the kind in his life. Naturally, I can only single out a *typical* occurrence. There, then, we have in our life, a fact of which we may say that its cause does not lie in a period of actual *incarnation* ; we may have contacted Christian Rosenkreutz in the spiritual world. I have laid particular stress on this outstanding event of the call. Other events, too, could be mentioned, events connected directly with the spiritual world and to be found during the life between death and a new birth ; but in our special circumstances we shall realise the significance

of this event which is so intimately connected with our spiritual Movement.

Such a happening surely indicates that quite a different attitude must take root in us if we want to have a clear vision of what actually plays into life. Most human beings rush hectically through life and are not thoughtful or attentive ; many say that one should not brood but engage in a life of action. But how much better it would be if precipitate deeds were left undone and people were to brood a little—their deeds, then, would be far more mature ! If only the beckoning call were heeded with composure and attentiveness ! Often it only *seems* as if we were brooding. It is precisely through quiet composure that strength comes to us—and then we shall follow when karma calls, understanding too, *when* it is calling. These are the things to which I wanted to call your attention today, for they do indeed make life more intelligible.

I have told you of the strange event in the thirteenth century, purely in the form of historical narrative, in order to indicate those things to which men must pay attention if they are to find their proper place in life and understand the beckoning call of Christian Rosenkreutz. To make this possible the preparation by the Twelve and the coming of the Thirteenth were necessary. The event in the thirteenth century was necessary in order that in our own time and hereafter, such a beckoning or other sign may be understood and obeyed. Christian Rosenkreutz has created this sign in order to rouse the attention of men to the demands of the times, to indicate to them that they belong to him and may dedicate their lives to him in the service of the progress of humanity.



## V

### THE CHRIST IMPULSE AS LIVING REALITY

*As a supplement to the lectures given in the year 1912 on the mission of Christian Rosenkreutz, we publish certain material from the year 1911. It will help us find the thread between the work of Jeshu ben Pandira,\* the teacher of the Essenes, and that of Christian Rosenkreutz.*

CHRIST works as a macrocosmic Power and is not a teacher like the other teachers of humanity. He has united Himself with the Earth, as a reality, as power, as very life.

The loftiest teachers of the successive epochs are the Bodhisattvas who already in the pre-Christian era pointed to Christ in His full reality of being ; again in the post-Christian era they point to Him as a Power Who is now united with the Earth. Thus the Bodhisattvas work both before and after Christ's physical life on Earth. He who was born as the son of a King in India, 550 years before Christ, lived and taught for twenty-nine years as a Bodhisattva, and then ascended to the rank of Buddha ; thereafter he was never again to appear on the Earth in a body of flesh but from then onwards he worked from the spiritual world. When this Bodhisattva had become Buddha, he was succeeded by the new Bodhisattva whose mission it is to lead mankind to an understanding of the Christ Impulse. All these things had come to pass before the appearance of Christ on the Earth. About the year 105 B.C. there was living in Palestine a man greatly defamed in rabbinical literature. His name was Jeshu ben Pandira and he was an incarnation of this new Bodhisattva. Jesus of Nazareth is an essentially different being, in that when he (Jesus

\*See *Jeshu ben Pandira* by Rudolf Steiner, also lectures 5 and 6 of the "Gospel of St. Matthew."

of Nazareth) reached the age of 30, he became the bearer of Christ, at the Baptism by John in the Jordan.

It was Jeshu ben Pandira from whom the Essene teachings were mainly derived. One of his pupils bore the name of Matthew, and he too pointed to the Mystery of Golgotha. Jeshu ben Pandira was stoned by his enemies and his corpse was hung on a cross as a further mark of contempt. His existence can be established without the help of occult research for plenty is said about him in rabbinical literature, although the information is either misleading or deliberately falsified. He bore within him the Individuality of the new Bodhisattva and was the successor of Gautama Buddha. The name of his pupil Matthew passed over to later pupils. The content of the Gospel known by that name had already been in existence since the time of the first Matthew, in the form of a description of the rituals contained in the ancient Mystery-scripts. In the life of Christ Jesus, the essential content of these Mysteries became reality on the physical plane. What were previously only pictures from the Mysteries, seeds as it were of subsequent happenings, now became reality. Thus the Christ Mystery had already been known prophetically, had indeed been enacted in the ceremonies of the ancient Mysteries, before it became, once and once only, an actual event on the physical plane.

It is also necessary for us to know that one of the characteristics of the incarnations of the Bodhisattva is that in his youth he cannot be recognised as such. Between his thirtieth and thirty-third years a great revolution takes place in the soul and the personality is fundamentally transformed. For example, a Moses- or Abraham-Individuality can take possession of the personality of a Bodhisattva at this time of his life.

About 3,000 years after our present time, this Bodhisattva will become the Maitreya Buddha. And then his influence from the spiritual world will flow into the hearts of men as a magic, moral power. The stream going forth from the Maitreya Buddha will unite with the stream of Western spiritual life connected with Christian Rosenkreutz.

The Bodhisattva who once lived as Jeshu ben Pandira comes down to the Earth again and again in a human body and will continue to do so in order to fulfil the rest of his task and particular mission which cannot, as yet, be completed. Although its consummation can already be foreseen by clairvoyance, there exists no larynx capable of producing the sounds of the speech that will be uttered when this Bodhisattva rises to the rank of Buddha. In agreement with oriental occultism, therefore, it can be said : 5,000 years after Gautama Buddha, that is to say, towards the end of the next 3,000 years, the Bodhisattva who is his successor will become Buddha. But as it is his mission to prepare human beings for the epoch connected paramountly with the development of true morality, when, in the future, he becomes Buddha, the words of his speech will contain the magic power of the Good. For thousands of years, therefore, oriental tradition has predicted : Maitreya Buddha, the Buddha who is to come, will be a Bringer of the Good by way of the word. He will then be able to teach men of the real nature of the Christ Impulse and in that age the Buddha stream and the Christ stream will flow into one. Only so can the Christ Mystery be truly understood. So mighty and all-pervading was the Impulse poured into the evolution of mankind that its waves surge onwards into future epochs. In the fourth epoch of post-Atlantean civilisation this Impulse was made manifest in the



incarnation of Christ in a human, physical body. And we are now going forward to an epoch when the Impulse will manifest in such a way that human beings will behold the Christ on the astral plane as an Ether Form.

Yesterday\* we heard that in still later epochs men will be able to behold Him in even higher forms in the aesthetic and moral spheres. But when we speak in this way of the Christ Impulse we are concerned with ideas which will be resolutely opposed above all by the Churches of Christendom. Great and incisive measures have been and are necessary in the onward progress of human evolution in order to promote increasing understanding of the Christ Impulse. Hitherto, indeed, such understanding has been lacking. And anyone who casts an eye at modern theology will perceive not only the futility of the attitude maintained by the opponents of Christianity, but also by those who claim to be steadfast adherents. The theosophical Movement in the West should have become that stream of spiritual life which out of true and genuine sources awakens understanding for Christianity in the modern age, but such endeavours met with strong opposition.

It is important to understand the real sources of Christianity, but owing to lack of time they cannot all be mentioned today. We shall speak only of those which have been accessible to mankind since the thirteenth century.

Since the thirteenth century, the Movement connected with the name Christian Rosenkreutz has been an integral part of the spiritual life of mankind. Spiritual measures of a very definite kind were necessary in the thirteenth century to enable the influence connected

\*Public lecture, Munich, 19th November, 1911. *From Paracelsus to Goethe*. (Not published in English.)

with this name to become part of the spiritual life of the modern age. At that time, when the spiritual world was entirely shut off from human vision, a "College" of twelve wise men came together. All the spiritual knowledge of the world and its secrets then existing was gathered into this College—distributed as it were in different sections. By means of certain occult processes there had been transmitted to seven of these twelve wise men, the wisdom that had passed over from Atlantis into the holy Rishis. In four others lived the wisdom of the sacred mysteries of the Indian, Persian, Egyptian and Graeco-Latin epochs respectively. And what existed in those days of the kind of culture which was to characterise the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch—this constituted the wisdom of the twelfth. The whole range of spiritual life was accessible to these Twelve.

Now it was known at that time that a certain Individuality who had been a contemporary of the Mystery of Golgotha, was to be born again as a child. Meanwhile, through a number of incarnations, this Individuality had unfolded a power of deep and fervent piety, devotion and love. The College of the twelve wise men took this child into their care soon after he was born ; shut off from the outside, exoteric world, he came under no influence save theirs ; they were his teachers as well as caring for his bodily needs. The manner of the child's development was altogether unique ; the profound spirituality he bore within him as the fruit of many incarnations came to expression, too, in his outer, bodily form. He was a weak and sickly child, but his body became marvellously transparent. He grew up and developed in such a way that a radiant, shining Spirit indwelt a body that had become transparent. Through the processes of a profoundly wise form of education, all

the wisdom from the ages preceding and during post-Atlantean times which the twelve wise men were able to give forth, rayed into his soul. By way of the deeper soul-forces, not by way of the intellect, the treasures of all this wisdom united in the soul of this child. He then fell into a strange condition. For a certain period of time he ceased to take nourishment ; all external functions of life were as though paralysed, and the whole of the wisdom received by the child rayed back to the Twelve. Each of them received back what he had originally given, but now in a different form. And those twelve wise men felt : Now, for the first time, the twelve great religions and world-conceptions have united into one interconnected whole, have been given to us ! And henceforward there lived in the twelve men what we call *Rosicrucian Christianity*.

The child lived only a short time longer. In the external world we give the name Christian Rosenkreutz to this Individuality. But it was not until the fourteenth century that he was known by this name. In the fourteenth century he was born again and lived then for more than a hundred years. Even when he was not incarnated in the flesh, he worked through his ether-body, always with the purpose of influencing the development of Christianity in its true form as the synthesis of all the great religions and systems of thought in the world. And he has worked on into our own time, either as a human being or from his ether-body, inspiring all that was done in the West to establish the synthesis of the great religions. His influence today is waxing and growing greater all the time. Many a person of whom we do not expect it, is a pupil chosen by Christian Rosenkreutz. Even today it is possible to speak of a sign by means of which Christian Rosenkreutz calls to one



whom he has chosen. Many people can apprehend this sign in their life ; it may express itself in a thousand ways, but these different manifestations all lead back to a typical form which may be described as follows.—

The choice may, for example, happen in the following way.—A man embarks upon some undertaking ; he spares no effort to make it successful and forges straight ahead towards his goal. While he is ruthlessly making his way in the world (he may be a thorough materialist), suddenly he hears a voice saying : “ Stop what you propose to do ! ” . . . And he will be aware that this was no physical voice. But now suppose that he *does* abstain from his project. If he has actually done this he may realise that if he had continued ruthlessly towards his goal, he would certainly have been led to his death. These are the two fundamentals : that he knows with certainty, firstly, that the warning came from the spiritual world, and secondly, that death would have come to him had he persisted in his undertaking. It is therefore revealed to one who is to become a pupil : You have actually been saved, moreover by a warning proceeding from a world of which, to begin with, you know nothing ! So far as circumstances of the earthly world are concerned, death has already come to you and your further life is to be regarded as a gift . . . And when the man in question realises this he will be led to the resolve to work in a spiritual movement. If the resolve is taken, this means that he has actually been chosen. This is how Christian Rosenkreutz begins to gather his pupils around him, and many human beings, if they were sufficiently alert, would be conscious of such an event in their inner life.

The human beings of whom it can be said that they were, or will now be, united in this way with Christian

Rosenkreutz, are those who should be the pioneers of a deeper understanding of esoteric Christianity. This stream of spiritual life connected with Christian Rosenkreutz provides the highest means for enabling the Christ Impulse to be understood in our present time. The beginning was already made long, long ago—a hundred years *before* the Mystery of Golgotha, through Jeshu ben Pandira whose essential mission was to make preparation for the coming of Christ. He had a pupil, Matthew, whose name subsequently passed over to a successor who was living at the time of Jesus of Nazareth. The greatest deed wrought by Jeshu ben Pandira was that he was the originator and preparer of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. The content of this Gospel derives from a ritual of Initiation and passages such as that concerning the Temptation, and others, too, originate from enactments in the ancient Mysteries. All these processes in the evolution of humanity were to become fact on the physical plane too. And this was what was written down, in outline, by the pupil of Jeshu ben Pandira.

Jeshu ben Pandira was not spared from the hard fate he himself predicted ; he was stoned and his corpse suspended on a cross. The original chronicle was preserved in the hands of a few of his adherents, in deep secrecy. We can best realise what happened to it later on, from what the great Church Father Jerome himself says, namely that he had received the document of the Matthew Gospel from a Christian sect. The original record was held at that time in the secret keeping of a small circle and through certain circumstances came into the hands of Jerome. He was charged by his Bishop with the task of translating it. Jerome himself narrates this ; but he says at the same time that because of the form and manner of the transcription, it should not pass

into the hands of the outside world. He wanted to translate it in such a way that its secrets would remain secret—and he says, furthermore, that he himself does not understand it. The character of what came into existence in this way was such that in secular language one man could express it in one way and another in a different way. And this is how it has come down to posterity. In reality, therefore, the world does not yet possess the Gospels in their true form. There is every reason and justification for spiritual research today to shed new light upon the Gospels. Spiritual research goes back to the Akasha Chronicle because there and there only are they to be found in their original form.

Let there be no mistake about it.—Christianity in its true form has yet to be raised from the ruins. One sign among many others indicates how necessary this is.—For example, in the year 1873, in France, a count was taken of those who could be said to belong inwardly and genuinely to Catholicism. They amounted to one-third ; the other two-thirds proved no longer to be adherents in the real sense—and these two-thirds were certainly not composed entirely of people who never feel the need of religion ! Life today is such that the religious longings of men do indeed incline towards Christ ; but the true sources of Christianity must be re-discovered. And it is to this end that the stream of spiritual life going out from Jeshu ben Pandira flows into unity with the other stream which, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, is connected with the name of Christian Rosenkreutz.



## VI

### THE STARRY HEAVEN ABOVE ME—THE MORAL LAW WITHIN ME

*The last lecture given in Neuchâtel in the year 1912 was to have been supplemented by that given the following day in St. Gallen, a full report of which is, unfortunately, not available. All that exists is in the form of notes and headings, so scattered and sparse that one is almost afraid to reproduce them. Yet their importance for the explanation of how the karma of man plays between his microcosmic and macrocosmic being is such that they are made accessible in order that the discerning reader may lose nothing.*

THEOSOPHY teaches us that the processes in operation between death and a new birth are connected with the conditions prevailing in the Cosmos. A very significant difference has here to be considered. Changes may take place within us during physical existence, but not, in the same sense, during the period between death and a new birth. Suppose, for example, between birth and death we have been related in some way to a human being, or have shared experiences with a friend. And now, after his death, we have learnt from him something that was *not* a common experience between us on the Earth. How is a relationship established after death? How can our feelings towards him give expression to sympathy or antipathy? When we ourselves have passed through the gate of death and are followed, later on, by someone with whom we had a certain relationship in physical life, this must necessarily remain unchanged for a long time after death; for after death we cannot add anything new to the old relationship. After passing into the spiritual world we are still subject to our own, individual karma. The time when this karma can be transformed comes only in a new life and can only be adjusted or fully discharged in a new incarnation. An individual among the Dead cannot, in spiritual existence,

work upon the other Dead in such a way as to change their life. But it is possible for a man still living on the Earth to have an effect upon one who has passed through death. Take the following case as an example.—Two human beings who love one another have different attitudes to Theosophy : one of them loves and the other hates it ; hence there is a spirit of opposition between them.

If the human being is able to speak of the freedom of his will, this is because the “ I ”-consciousness takes far deeper paths than does the astral consciousness ; in the depths of soul, therefore, a man often yearns for what, in his conscious life, he hates. How can we be of help to one of the Dead ? We must be united with him by a spiritual bond. We can help, for example, by quietly reading to him ; uniting ourselves with him inwardly and lovingly, we can take him with us through a sequence of thoughts, we can send ideas and imaginations up to him in the higher worlds. Such services of friendship are always helpful. Reading in this way is of benefit, although in earthly life the man may have been too indifferent, too easy-going ; we can lighten his sufferings even when there was no evidence in his life that he longed for these things. Much blessing is often sent from the physical plane into the spiritual worlds, in spite of the great gulf which separates the life between birth and death from the life between death and a new birth.

Many living people will feel that they are intimately connected with the Dead ; they will also be conscious that they help the Dead. The first souls with whom we come into contact after death are those with whom we had already formed close ties on the Earth, not those who were unknown to us on Earth. A direct continuation of the earthly life takes place after death. The soul is

*inside* whatever it perceives, fills it through and through.

During the period of Kamaloca, the ether-form of man expands as far as the orbit of the Moon. All human beings occupy the same space ; they are not “ in each other’s way ” during the Kamaloca-period. After this period of Moon-existence we inhabit the Mercury-sphere ; then the Venus-sphere, then the Sun-sphere ; here we live within a sphere of higher spirituality, for the astral elements of the Moon-sphere have been overcome. Life in each of the planetary spheres depends upon the mood and quality of soul acquired during the Moon-period ; the life of those who have unfolded the quality of moral fellow-feeling differs from the life of those who are egoists. The former open themselves to humanity. Above all we shall be able to form a connection with those with whom we were together in earthly life. The nature of these relationships will depend upon whether we have been a comfort or a source of trouble to the others. A man of inferior morality will become a spiritual hermit ; a truly moral man, on the contrary, a sociable inhabitant of the Mercury-sphere.

During the following Venus condition, we expand to the outermost circumference of the Venus-sphere. A man who in earthly life had no religious feelings, who had received into himself nothing of the Eternal, the Divine, who during the Mercury-period had no bonds with other human souls, will become a hermit even during the Venus-period ; but there too he is a sociable being if, during the Mercury-period he was together with other kindred spirits and warm mutual relationships existed between them. Atheists become hermits in the Venus-period ; monists are condemned to live in the prison-house of their own souls, so that the one is shut off from the other. A hermit has a dull, torpid



kind of consciousness from which other human souls are excluded. A sociable being has a bright, clear consciousness which finds its way into the other being. Man ascends higher and higher into the world of the stars ; but the more dimly he lives through these regions, the more rapidly he skims through the ages and therefore returns the more quickly to reincarnation—this applies, for example, to those who were criminals or idiots in their previous existence. On the other hand, the clearer consciousness has been in the world of the stars, the more slowly does the soul return to incarnation. Man must have been fully conscious out in the Cosmos if he is to be capable of building and shaping the physical brain of his subsequent life.—The condition of existence in which he becomes an inhabitant of the Sun-sphere sets in about a century after death. During this Sun-period it is possible to acquire a certain relationship to all human beings. If a man has consciously received the Christ Impulse, the way to all other human beings is open for him. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, union can be achieved with the Christ Impulse, the supreme spiritual Power. But a man who has not received the Christ Impulse remains a hermit, even in the Sun-sphere.

When a human being with his aura is revealed to the clairvoyant during the Moon-period of existence, a seed or kernel, enclosed in a kind of auric cloud, is perceived within the vast ether-body. This aura is dark and remains so, even during the Mercury-period. During the Venus-period, one side of the auric cloud lights up ; and if, as clairvoyants, we then observe the human being, we perceive that if he was a moral, religious man, he is able, from that time onwards, to have real contact with the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. If he was a good and righteous man he lives in spiritual contact with

higher Beings during the Venus-period ; if he was an unrighteous man he cannot know or recognise these higher Beings and is thus condemned to the pain of isolation.

Before the Mystery of Golgotha, in the first epoch of post-Atlantean culture, conditions were such that the Throne of Christ was to be seen upon the Sun. Those who had been good and righteous in their lives found their way to the Christ on the plane of Sun-existence. In the age of Zarathustra, the Christ was already on His way to the Earth and could not be found on the Sun. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ has been united with the Earth. If, on the Earth, men have not received the Christ Impulse, they cannot find Christ between death and a new birth. When a man has become a Sun-dweller and has taken the Christ Impulse into himself, a multitude of facts, known as the Akasha Chronicle of the Sun, lie open before him. If, on the Earth, he had *not* found Christ, he cannot read the Akasha Chronicle on the Sun. We can learn to read this great script if, on the Earth, we have accepted the Mystery of Golgotha with warmth of heart—and then, on the Sun, we are able to perceive the Deeds of Christ on the Sun through the millennia. Existence today is such that we are strong enough to become Sun-dwellers.—Later on we enter the sphere of Mars, then the spheres of Jupiter and Saturn and then, finally, the world of the fixed stars. On the path of return to the Earth, the ether-body of man shrinks and shrinks in size—until it is so tiny that he can incarnate again in a new human germ-cell.

Up to the period of Sun-existence, we stand under the leadership of Christ. From the Sun-existence onwards we need a Leader whose task it is to guide us to the further realms of cosmic space. Lucifer now comes to our side. If we have fallen prey to him on the physical

plane, it is bad for us ; but if on the Earth we have rightly understood the Christ Impulse, then we are strong enough on the Sun to follow even Lucifer without danger. From then onwards he has charge of the inner progress of the soul, just as on this side of the Sun, Christ has had charge of our ascent. If on the Earth we have received the Christ Impulse, Christ is the Keeper of the soul on the path to the Sun. Beyond the periphery of the Sun-sphere, Lucifer leads us out into the Cosmos ; *within* the periphery of the Sun, he is the Tempter.

If during the Sun-period we have been armed with the Christ Impulse, Christ and Lucifer guide us as Brothers. Yet how differently words spoken by Christ and by Lucifer are to be understood ! As a wonderful precept there are the words of Christ : “ In you lives the spark of the Divine, ye are Gods.” (John, 10. 34).—And then, Lucifer’s words of temptation : “ Ye shall be as Gods.” (Genesis, 3. 5.) These are similar utterances—but, at the same time, in dire antithesis ! Everything depends upon whether here, on the Earth, man stands at the side of Christ or at the side of Lucifer.

Theosophy gives us a deep and profound understanding of the world. A certain knowledge must come to us in the physical body. On the Earth we must acquire understanding of Christ and Lucifer through Theosophy—otherwise we cannot pass with consciousness into cosmic space.

The time is now beginning on the Earth when men must know quite consciously whether it is Christ or Lucifer who, after death, whispers these words into the soul. In the life between death and a new birth we must unfold a true understanding of Christ in order that we shall not be condemned to wander through the Cosmos in a state of sleep.



Theosophy must be an influence, too, in little things. More and more it will become apparent whether, or not, forces of life have been acquired between death and a new birth. There will be human beings born with dried up, withered bodies, because owing to their antagonism to Theosophy they have been unable to gather life-forces from the Cosmos. Understanding of Theosophy is necessary for the sake of Earth-evolution itself ! If men have opened their souls to Theosophy, the knowledge that before this life they were in a spiritual world, will bring them happiness. "The starry heavens above me ; the moral law within me"—this realisation alone gives the world its greatness. Man says to himself : "In the world of the stars I received the essence and content of my inner life ; what I lived through in the cosmic expanse flashes up now within my soul. The existence of evil impulses in my soul is due to the fact that during my sojourn in the world of the stars I did not try to receive its forces or the Spirit-Power of Christ." We have, indeed, yet to learn how to achieve union with the Macrocosm. Today the human being can have only a dim premonition of what happens between death and a new birth.

He feels : In earthly existence I live within my soul and bear in my Spirit the forces of the starry heavens. If a man meditates deeply on this concept it will become a great and mighty power within him.

## VII

### THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ

#### Its Character and Purpose

##### THE MISSION OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA ON MARS

FRIENDS have expressed the wish that I should speak today on the subject of the lecture here a year ago,\* when it was said that the Initiation of Christian Rosenkreutz took place in very special circumstances in the thirteenth century and that since then this Individuality has worked unceasingly in the spiritual life. Today we shall hear still more of Christian Rosenkreutz as we study the great task which devolved upon him at the dawn of the age of intellect in order that provision might be made for the future of humanity.

A being like Christian Rosenkreutz, who is present in the world as a great and eminent occultist has to reckon with the conditions peculiar to his epoch. The intrinsic character of spiritual life as it is in the present age, arose for the first time when modern natural science came upon the scene with men like Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, Galileo and others. Human beings today are taught about Copernicus in their early schooldays and the impressions then received remain with them their whole life long. In earlier times it was quite different.—Try to picture what a contrast there is between a man of the modern age and one who lived centuries ago. *Before* the days of Copernicus, everyone believed that the Earth remains at rest in cosmic space with the sun and the

\**Rosicrucian Christianity*. Neuchâtel, 27th and 28th September, 1911. (Not published in English.)

stars revolving around it. The very ground slipped from under men's feet when Copernicus came forward with the doctrine that the Earth is moving with tremendous speed through the universe ! We should not underestimate the effects of such a revolution in thinking, accompanied as it was by a corresponding change in the life of feeling. All the thoughts and ideas of men were suddenly different from what they had been before the days of Copernicus ! And now let us ask : What has occultism to say about this revolution in thinking ?

One who asks from the standpoint of occultism, what kind of world-conception can be derived from the Copernican tenets, will have to admit that although these ideas can lead to great achievements in the realm of natural science and in external life, they are incapable of promoting any understanding of the spiritual foundations of the world and the things of the world—for truth to tell there has never been a worse instrument for understanding the spiritual foundations of the world than the ideas of Copernicus—never in the evolution of the human mind ! The reason for this is that all these Copernican concepts are inspired by Lucifer. Copernicanism is one of the last attacks, one of the last great attacks made by Lucifer upon the evolution of man. In earlier, pre-Copernican thought, the external world was, indeed, maya : but much traditional wisdom, much truth concerning the world and the things of the world still survived. Since Copernicus, however, man has maya around him not only in his material perceptions but his concepts and ideas *in themselves* are maya. Today men regard it as self-evident that the sun stands firmly at the centre with the planets revolving around it in ellipses. In no far distant future, however, it will be realised that the view of the world of stars held by



Copernicus is much less correct than the earlier, Ptolemaic view. The view of the world held by the school of Copernicus and Kepler is, in many respects, convenient, but as an explanation of the macrocosm it is not the truth.

And so Christian Rosenkreutz, confronted by a world-conception which is itself a maya, an illusion, was obliged to take a stand with regard to it. It devolved upon him to rescue occultism in an age when all the concepts of science were themselves maya—for with its material globes in cosmic space the Copernican world-system was maya, even as concept. Thus towards the end of the sixteenth century, there took place one of those Conferences of which we heard here a year ago in connection with the Initiation of Christian Rosenkreutz himself in the thirteenth century.—In this later occult Conference of leading Individualities,\* Christian Rosenkreutz was associated with certain other great Individualities concerned with the leadership of humanity. There were present not only personalities in incarnation on the physical plane but entelechies operating in the spiritual worlds ; and the Individuality who in the sixth century before Christ had been incarnated as Gautama Buddha also participated.

The occultists of the East rightly believe—for they know it to be the truth—that the Buddha who in his twenty-ninth year rose from the rank of Bodhisattva to that of Buddha, had incarnated then for the last time in a physical body. It is absolutely true that when the individuality of a Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha, he no longer appears on the Earth in physical incarnation. But this does not mean that he ceases to be active in the affairs of the Earth. The Buddha continues to work for

\*See *East in the Light of the West*, Chapter VI, etc.

the Earth, although he is never again present in a physical body but sends down his influence from the spiritual world. The "Gloria" heard by the Shepherds in the fields proclaimed from the spiritual world that the forces of Buddha were streaming into the astral body of the Child Jesus described in St. Luke's Gospel. The words of the Gloria came from Buddha who was working in the astral body of the Child Jesus. This wonderful message of Peace and Love is an integral part of Buddha's contribution to Christianity. But later on too, the Buddha works into the deeds of men—not physically but from the spiritual world—and he has co-operated in measures that have been necessary for the sake of progress in the evolution of humanity.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, for example, there was a very important centre of Initiation in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, in which the Buddha taught, in his spirit-body. In such Schools there are teachers who live in the physical body ; but it is also possible for the more advanced pupils to receive instruction from one who teaches in an ether-body only. Among the pupils of the Buddha at that time was one who incarnated again a few centuries later. We are speaking, therefore, of a physical personality who centuries later lived again in a physical body and is known to us as St. Francis of Assisi. The quality characteristic of Francis of Assisi and of the life of his monks—which has so much similarity with that of the disciples of Buddha—is due to the fact that Francis of Assisi himself was a pupil of Buddha.

It is easy to perceive the contrast between the qualities characteristic of men who like Francis of Assisi were striving fervently for the Spirit and those engrossed in the world of industry, technical life and discoveries of

modern civilisation. Many there were, including occultists, who suffered deeply at the thought that in the future two separate classes of human beings would inevitably arise. They foresaw the one class wholly given up to the affairs of practical life, convinced that security depends entirely upon the production of means of nourishment, the construction of machines, and so forth ; whereas the other class would be composed of men who, like Francis of Assisi, withdraw altogether from the practical affairs of the world for the sake of the spiritual life. Left to itself, without intervention, history would inevitably have taken this course. But in the wise counsels of the spiritual worlds, steps were taken to avert the worst form of this evil on the Earth.

A Conference of the greatest and most advanced Individualities was called together by Christian Rosenkreutz. His most intimate pupil and friend, the great teacher Buddha, participated in these counsels and in the decisions reached. At that spiritual Conference it was resolved that henceforward Buddha would dwell on Mars and there unfold his influence and activity. Buddha transferred his work to Mars in the year 1604. And on Mars he performed a deed similar to that performed by Christ on the Earth in the Mystery of Golgotha. Christian Rosenkreutz had known what the work of Buddha on Mars would signify for the whole Cosmos, what his teachings of Nirvana, of liberation from the Earth would signify on Mars. The teaching of Nirvana was unsuited to a form of culture directed primarily to practical life. Buddha's pupil, Francis of Assisi, was an example of the fact that this teaching produces in its adepts complete remoteness from the world and its affairs. But the content of Buddhism which was not adapted to the practical life of man between birth and



death was of high importance for the soul between death and a new birth. Christian Rosenkreutz realised that for a certain purification needed on Mars, the teachings of Buddha were pre-eminently suitable. The Christ Being, the Essence of Divine Love, had once come down to the Earth to a people in many respects alien, and in the seventeenth century, Buddha, the Prince of Peace, went to Mars—the planet of war and conflict—to execute his mission there. The souls on Mars were warlike, torn with strife. Thus Buddha performed a deed of sacrifice similar to the deed performed in the Mystery of Golgotha by the Bearer of the Essence of Divine Love. To dwell on Mars as Buddha was a deed of sacrifice offered to the Cosmos. He was as it were the lamb offered up in sacrifice on Mars and to accept this environment of strife was for him a kind of crucifixion. Buddha performed this deed on Mars in the service of Christian Rosenkreutz. Thus do the great Beings who guide the world work together, not only on the Earth but from one planet to another.

Since the Mystery of Mars was consummated by Gautama Buddha, human beings have been able to receive different forces from Mars during the corresponding period between death and a new birth. Not only does a man bring with him into a new birth quite different forces from Mars, but because of the influence exercised by the spiritual deed of Buddha, forces also stream from Mars into men who practise meditation as a means for reaching the spiritual world. When the modern pupil of Spiritual Science meditates in the sense indicated by Christian Rosenkreutz, forces sent to the Earth by Buddha as the Redeemer of Mars, stream to him.

Christian Rosenkreutz is thus revealed to us as the

great Servant of Christ Jesus ; but what Buddha, as the emissary of Christian Rosenkreutz, was destined to contribute to the work of Christ Jesus—this had also to come to the help of the work performed by Christian Rosenkreutz in the service of Christ Jesus. The soul of Gautama Buddha has not again been in physical incarnation on the Earth but is utterly dedicated to the work of the Christ Impulse. What was the word of Peace sent forth from the Buddha to the Child Jesus described in the Gospel of St. Luke ? “ Glory in the Heights and on the Earth—Peace ! ” And this word of Peace, issuing mysteriously from Buddha, resounds from the planet of war and conflict to the soul of men on the Earth.

Because all these things had transpired, it was possible to avert the division of human beings into the two distinct classes—consisting on the one hand of men of the type of Francis of Assisi and on the other, men who live wholly in materialism. If Buddha had remained in direct and immediate connection with the Earth he would not have been able to concern himself with the “ men of practical affairs ” ; and his influence would have made the others into monks like Francis of Assisi. Through the deed of Redemption performed by Gautama Buddha on Mars, it is possible for us, when we are passing through the Mars-period of existence between death and a new birth, to become followers of Francis of Assisi without causing subsequent deprivation to the Earth. Grotesque as it may seem, it is true nevertheless, that since the seventeenth century, every human being in the Mars-existence is, for a time, a Buddhist, a Franciscan, an immediate follower of Francis of Assisi. Francis of Assisi has since made only one brief incarnation on Earth as a child ; he died in childhood and has not again incarnated. He is intimately linked with the work

of Buddha on Mars and is one of his most eminent followers.

We have thus placed before our souls a picture of what came to pass through that great Conference at the end of the sixteenth century, resembling what had happened on Earth in the thirteenth century, when Christian Rosenkreutz gathered his faithful around him. Nothing less was accomplished than this.—It was possible to avert from humanity the threatened separation into two classes, so that men might remain inwardly united. And those who are intent upon esoteric development, in spite of their absorption in practical life, can achieve their goal because the Buddha is working from the sphere of Mars and not from the sphere of the Earth. Those forces which help to promote a healthy esoteric life are also attributable to the work and influence of Buddha.

In my book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, I have dealt with the methods that are appropriate for meditation today. The essential point is that in Rosicrucian training, development is such that the human being is not torn away from the earthly activities demanded of him by karma. Rosicrucian esoteric development can proceed without causing the slightest disturbance in any situation or occupation. Because Christian Rosenkreutz was able to transfer the work of Buddha from the Earth to Mars, it has become possible for the influences of Buddha, from outside the Earth, to pour down to men.

Again, then, we have heard of one of the spiritual deeds of Christian Rosenkreutz but to understand these deeds of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries we must find our way to their esoteric meaning and significance. It would be good if people were to realise how entirely consistent the progress of Theosophy in the West has



been since the founding of the Middle European Section of the Theosophical Society. Here in Switzerland, lecture-courses have been given on the four Gospels. The substance of all these lectures is contained in germ in my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, written twelve years ago. The book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* describes the Western path of development that is compatible with practical activities of every kind. Today I have indicated that a basic factor in these matters is the mission assigned to Gautama Buddha by Christian Rosenkreutz, for I have spoken of the significant influence which the transference of Buddha to Mars made possible in our solar system. And so stone after stone fits into its proper place in our Western Theosophy, for it has been built up consistently and in obedience to principle and everything that comes later harmonises with what went before. Inner consistency is essential in any conception of the world, if it is to stand upon the ground of truth. And those who are able to draw near to Christian Rosenkreutz see with wondering veneration by what consistent paths he has carried through the great mission entrusted to him. In our time this is the Rosicrucian-Christian path of development. That the great teacher of Nirvana is now fulfilling a mission outside the Earth, on Mars—this too is one of the wise and consistent deeds of Christian Rosenkreutz.

#### A CONCLUDING INDICATION

As a conclusion, the following brief indication may here be given for those who aspire to become pupils of Christian Rosenkreutz.

A year ago we heard how the knowledge of a certain relationship to Christian Rosenkreutz may come to man

involuntarily. But it is also possible to put a kind of question to one's own destiny : " Can I make myself worthy to become a pupil of Christian Rosenkreutz ? " . . . Let such a man try to place before his soul a picture of Christian Rosenkreutz, the great Teacher of the modern age, in the midst of the Twelve, sending forth Gautama Buddha into the Cosmos as his emissary at the beginning of the seventeenth century, thus bringing about a consummation of what came to pass in the sixth century before Christ through the Sermon at Benares. If this picture, with its whole import, stands vividly before the soul, if a man feels that something streaming from this great and impressive picture wrings from his soul the words : O Man, thou art not merely an earthly Being ; thou art in truth a Cosmic Being ! . . . then he may believe with quiet confidence : " I can aspire to become a pupil of Christian Rosenkreutz." This picture of the relationship of Christian Rosenkreutz to Gautama Buddha is a potent and effective meditation.

Such is the aspiration I would fain bring to life in your souls . . . Study of the world must always interest us profoundly, but this study must be the means whereby through our *own* development we are led on into the higher worlds.

ROSICRUCIANISM  
AND MODERN INITIATION

SIX LECTURES BY RUDOLF STEINER

Given in Dornach, January, 1924

*Authorised translation from shorthand reports unrevised  
by the lecturer*

TRANSLATION BY MARY ADAMS



## INDICATION OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. RESEARCH INTO THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT DURING THE MIDDLE AGES . . . . .	93
Inward experience of Ideas during the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries.	
	4th January, 1924
II. HIDDEN CENTRES OF THE MYSTERIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES . . . . .	109
The Search for Self-Knowledge in connection with Revelation and with the Illumination of Nature—The Mysteries of Speech.	
	5th January, 1924
III. THE TIME OF TRANSITION . . . . .	126
The Brothers of the Common Life—Revelations in Symbol—The Founding of Rosicrucianism—Brotherhood in Knowledge—The Sacrifice of the Star-Knowledge and the Impulse to Freedom.	
	6th January, 1924
IV. THE RELATIONSHIP OF EARTHLY MAN TO THE SUN . . . . .	141
Heart-Knowledge and the Attitude of the Rosicrucian Schools—Intelligence and the Earth-Demon—Lost Manhood—The Dawn of the Michael Age.	
	11th January, 1924
V. OCCULT SCHOOLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CEN- TURY . . . . .	156
Rosicrucian Figures and Symbols—Inner Experience of the Bones and of the Marrow in the Bones—The Relationship of the Spinal Marrow to the Moon—Substance and Form.	
	12th January, 1924
VI. THE TASKS OF THE MICHAEL AGE . . . . .	172
Writings in the Astral Light and Evolution-Memory—The Principle of the Rosicrucian Initiation—The Secret of Modern Initiation—The Principle of Initiation as a Principle of Civilisation.	
	13th January, 1924

# I

## RESEARCH INTO THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

IN close connection with what I had to bring before you in the lectures given at our Christmas Foundation Meeting, I should like, in the lectures that are now to be given, to speak further of the movement that is leading us in modern times to research into the life of the spirit. I refer to the movement spoken of under the name of Rosicrucianism or some other occult designation, and I should like to take this opportunity of giving you a picture of it in its inner aspect and nature. It will be necessary first of all to say something, by way of introduction, about the whole manner of forming ideas which had become customary round about the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries A.D., and which only very gradually disappeared ; for it is even to be found here and there—among stragglers, as it were—as late as the nineteenth century. I do not want today to deal with the matter from a historical point of view, but rather to place before your mind's eye conceptions and ideas that you are to think of as inwardly experienced by certain people belonging to these centuries. In point of fact it is not generally realised that we have only to go back a comparatively short time in history, to find that the men who were accounted to be scholars were possessed of a world of ideas altogether different from our own.

In these days we speak of chemical substances, we enumerate seventy or eighty chemical elements ; but we have no idea how very little we are saying when we

name one substance as oxygen, another as nitrogen, and so on. Oxygen, for instance, is something that is present only under certain well-defined conditions—conditions of warmth, e.g., and other circumstances of earthly life, and it is impossible for a reasonable person to unite a conception of *reality* with something that, when the temperature is raised by so and so many degrees, is no longer present in the same measure or manner as it is under the conditions that obtain for man's physical life on Earth. It was the realisation of facts like this that underlay research during the early and middle part of the Middle Ages ; the life of research of those times set out to get beyond the relative in existence, to arrive at true existence.

I have marked a transition as between the ninth and tenth centuries A.D., because before this time man's perceptions were still altogether spiritual. It would never, for example, have occurred to a scholar of the ninth century to imagine Angels, Archangels, or Seraphim as falling short in respect of reality—purely in respect of *reality*—of the physical men he saw with his eyes. You will find that before the tenth century, scholars always speak of the spiritual Beings, the so-called *Intelligences of the Cosmos*, as of beings one actually meets in life. The people of that time were of course well aware that the day was long past when such vision had been common human experience, but they knew that in certain circumstances the meeting could still take place. We must not, for instance, overlook the fact that on into the ninth and tenth centuries countless priests of the Catholic Church were quite conscious of how, in the course of their celebration of the Mass, it happened that in this or that enactment they met spiritual Beings, the *Intelligences of the Cosmos*. With the ninth and tenth



centuries, however, the direct and immediate connection with the Intelligences of the Universe began to disappear from men's consciousness ; and there began to light up, in its place, the consciousness of the *Elements of the Cosmos*, the earthy, the fluid or watery, the airy, the warm or fiery. And so it came about that just as hitherto men had spoken of Cosmic Intelligences that rule the movements of the planets, that lead the planets across the constellations of the fixed stars, and so forth, now they spoke instead of the immediate environment of the Earth. They spoke of the elements of earth, water, air, fire. Of chemical substances, in the modern sense of the word, they did not as yet take account. That came much later. It would, however, be a great mistake to imagine that the scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—even in a sense, the scholars of the eighteenth century—had ideas of warmth, air, water, earth, that resembled the ideas men have today. Warmth is spoken of today merely as a condition in which bodies exist. No one speaks any longer of actual warmth-ether. Air, water—these have likewise become for the modern man completely abstract. It is time we studied these ideas and learned to enter into a true understanding of them. And so today I should like to give you a picture, showing you how a scholar of those times would speak to his pupils.

When I wrote my *Outline of Occult Science* I was obliged to make the account of the evolution of the Earth accord at any rate a little with the prevailing ideas of the present day. In the thirteenth and twelfth centuries one would have been able to give the account quite differently. The following might then have been found in a certain chapter, e.g., of *Occult Science*. An idea would have been called up, to begin with, of the Beings who may be designated

as the Beings of the First Hierarchy : *Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones*. The Seraphim would have been characterised as Beings with whom there is no subject and object, with whom subject and object are one and the same, Beings who would not say : Outside me are things—but : The world is, and I am the World, and the World is I. Such Beings know only *of themselves*, and this knowledge of themselves is for them an inner experience of which man has a weak reflection when he has the experience of being filled, shall we say, with a *glowing enthusiasm*. It is, you know, quite difficult to make the man of today understand what is meant by “glowing enthusiasm.” Even in the beginning of the nineteenth century men knew better what it is than they do today. In those days it could still happen that some poem or other was being read aloud and the people were so filled with enthusiasm—forgive me, but it really was so—that present-day man would say they had all gone out of their minds. They were so moved, so warmed ! Today people freeze up just when you expect them to be “enthused.” Now it was lifting this element of enthusiasm, this rapture of the soul that came naturally especially to the men of Middle and Eastern Europe—it was by lifting it into consciousness, by making it alone the complete content of consciousness, that men came to form an idea of the inner life of the Seraphim. Again as a bright, clear element in consciousness, full of light, so that *thought turns directly into light*, illuminating everything—such an idea did men form of the element of consciousness of the Cherubim. And the element of consciousness of the Thrones was conceived as *sustaining, bearing the worlds in Grace*.

There you have one such sketch. I could go on speaking of it for a long time. For the moment I only wanted

to show you that in those days one would have tried to describe the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones in the true qualities of their being.

And then one would have gone on to say : the Choir of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones works together, in such wise that the Thrones found and establish a kernel ; the Cherubim let their own light-filled being stream forth from this centre or kernel ; and the Seraphim enwrap the whole in a mantle of warmth and enthusiasm that rays far out into cosmic space.\*

All the drawing I have made is *Beings* : in the midst the Thrones ; in the circumference around them the Cherubim ; and, outermost of all, the Seraphim. All is essential Being, Beings who move and weave into one another, do, think, will, feel in one another. All is of the very essence of Being. And now, if a being having the right sensitiveness were to take its path through the space where the Thrones have in this manner established a kernel and centre, where the Cherubim have made a kind of circling around it and the Seraphim have, as it were, enclosed the whole—if a being with the required sensitiveness were to come into this realm of the activity of the First Hierarchy, it would feel warmth in varying differentiations—here greater warmth, there less ; but it would all be an experience of soul, and yet at the same time physical experience in the senses ; that is to say, when the being felt itself warm in soul, the feeling would be actually the feeling you have when you are in a well-warmed room.

Such a united building-up by Beings of the First Hierarchy did verily once take place in the Universe ; it formed what we call the Saturn existence. The warmth is merely the expression of the fact that *the Beings are*

\*Drawings were made on the blackboard, with coloured chalks.



*there*. The warmth is nothing more than the expression of the fact that the Beings are there.

A picture will perhaps make clearer to you what I mean. Let us suppose you have an affection for a certain human being. You feel his presence gives you warmth. But now someone comes along who is frightfully abstract and says : “ The person himself doesn’t interest me, I will imagine him absent ; the warmth he sheds around him, that alone is what interests me.” Or suppose he doesn’t even say “ The warmth *he sheds around him* is all that interests me.” Suppose he says : “ The *warmth* is all that interests me.” He talks nonsense, of course, you will see that at once ; for if the man is not there who sheds the warmth, then the warmth is not there either. The warmth is in any case only there when the man is there. In itself it is nothing. The man must be there, if the warmth is to be there. Even so must Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones be there ; if the Beings are not there, neither is the warmth. The warmth is merely the revelation of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

Now in the time of which I speak, everything was exactly as I have described it. Men spoke of Elements. They spoke of the Element of Warmth, and by the Element of Warmth they understood Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones—and that is the Saturn existence.

The description went further. It was said : Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones—these alone have the power to bring forth something of the nature of Saturn, to place it into the Cosmos. The highest Hierarchy alone is capable of placing such an existence into the Cosmos. But when this highest Hierarchy had once placed it there and a new world-becoming had taken its start, then the evolution could go on further. The Sun, as it were, that is formed of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones could

carry evolution further. And it came to pass in the following manner. Beings of the Second Hierarchy, *Kyriotetes*, *Dynamis*, *Exusiai*, Beings that had been generated by the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, press into the space that has been formed through the working of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, that has been fashioned to Saturn warmth. Thither entered younger, cosmically younger Beings. And how did these cosmically younger Beings work? Whereas the Cherubim, Seraphim and Thrones reveal themselves in the Element of Warmth, the Beings of the second Hierarchy form themselves in the Element of *Light*. Saturn is dark; it gives warmth. And now within the dark world of the Saturn existence arises that which can arise through the working of the Sons of the First Hierarchy, through *Exusiai*, *Dynamis* and *Kyriotetes*.

What is it that is able now to arise within the Saturn warmth? The penetration of the Second Hierarchy signifies an *inner illumination*. The Saturn Warmth is inwardly shone through with light and at the same time it becomes denser. Instead of only the Warmth Element there is now also *Air*. And in the revelation of Light we have the entry of the Second Hierarchy.

You must clearly understand that it is in very deed and truth *Beings* who thus press their way into the Saturn existence. One who had the requisite power of perception would see the event as a penetration of *Light*; it is Light that reveals the path of the Beings. And wherever Light occurs, there occurs too, under certain conditions, shadow, darkness, dark shadow. Through the penetration by the Second Hierarchy in the form of Light, shadow also comes to pass. What is shadow? It is *Air*. And indeed until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries men knew what Air is. Today men know only

that air consists of oxygen, nitrogen and so forth. When that is said, it is very much as if someone were to say about a watch that it consisted of glass and silver. He would be saying nothing at all about the watch. And nothing at all is said about Air as a cosmic phenomenon when we say that it consists of oxygen and nitrogen. We say very much, on the other hand, if we know : Air comes forth from the Cosmos as the *shadow of Light*. In actual fact we have, with the entry of the second Hierarchy into the Saturn warmth, the entry of Light and we have too the shadow of Light, Air. And when we have this we have Sun. Such is the way one would have had to speak in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries.

And what follows after this ? The further evolution comes about through the working of the Sons of the Second Hierarchy—*Archai, Archangels, Angels*. The Second Hierarchy have accomplished the entry of the Element of Light, Light that has drawn after it its shadow, the darkness of Air—not the indifferent, neutral darkness that belongs to Saturn, the darkness that is simply absence of Light, but the darkness that is wrought out as the antithesis of Light. And now to this Element of Light the Third Hierarchy—*Archai, Archangels, Angels*—add through their own nature and being a new Element, an Element that is like our human desire, like our impulse to *strive after something*, to long for something. Thereby the following comes to pass.

Let us suppose an Archai or Archangel Being enters, and comes upon an Element of Light, encounters, as it were, a place of Light. In this place of Light the Being receives, through its receptivity for the Light, the urge, the desire for darkness. The Angel Being bears Light into darkness—or an Angel Being bears darkness into Light. These Beings are mediators, messengers between



Light and Darkness. It follows from this that what previously has only shone in Light and drawn after it its shadow, the darkness of Air, begins now to shine in colour, to glow in a play of colour. Light begins to appear in darkness, darkness in light. The Third Hierarchy create *colour out of light and darkness*.

Here we may find a connection with something that is historical, with something that is to be found in written document. For in the time of Aristotle men still knew, when they contemplated in the Mysteries, whence colours come ; they knew that the Beings of the Third Hierarchy have to do with colour. Therefore Aristotle, in his colour harmony, showed that colour signifies a working together of Light and Darkness. But this spiritual element in man's thought, whereby he knew that behind Warmth he has to see Beings of the First Hierarchy, behind Light and its shadow Darkness, Beings of the Second Hierarchy, and behind the iridescent play of Colour he has to see in a great cosmic harmony, Beings of the Third Hierarchy—this spiritual element in man's thought has been lost. And nothing is left for man today but the unhappy Newtonian Theory of Colour. The Initiates continued to smile at Newton's theory till the eighteenth century, but in that time it became an article of faith for professional physicists.

One must indeed have lost all knowledge of the spiritual world when one can speak in the sense of Newton's Theory of Colour. If one is still inwardly stimulated by the spiritual world, as was the case with Goethe, then one resists it. One places before men the truth of the matter, as Goethe did, and attacks with might and main. For Goethe never censured so hardly as when he had to censure Newton, he went for him and his theory hammer and tongs ! Such a thing is incomprehensible nowadays,

for the simple reason that in our time anyone who does not recognise the Newtonian Theory of Colour is a fool in the eyes of the physicists. But things were different in Goethe's time. He did not stand alone. True, he stood alone as one who spoke openly on the matter ; but there were others who really knew, even as late as the end of the eighteenth century, whence colour comes, who knew with absolute certainty how colour wells up from within the Spiritual.

But now we must go further. We have seen that Air is the shadow of Light. And as, when Light arises, under certain conditions we find the dark shadow, so when colour is present and works as a *reality*—and it can do so, for when it penetrates into the Air-element, it flames up in this Air, works in it, in a word *is* something, is no mere reflection but a reality flashing and sparkling in the Air-element—when this is so, then under certain conditions we get pressure, counter-pressure, and out of the real Colour there comes into being the fluid, the Element of *Water*. As, for cosmic thinking, the shadow of Light is *Air*, so is Water the reflection, the creation of Colour in the Cosmos.

You will say : No, that I *cannot* understand ! But try for once really to grasp Colour in its true meaning. Red—surely you do not think that red is, in its essence, the neutral surface it is generally regarded as being ? Red is something that makes an attack upon you.—I have often spoken of this.—You want to run away from red ; it thrusts you back. Blue-violet, on the other hand, you want to run after ! It runs away from you all the time ; it grows deeper and ever deeper. Everything is contained in the colours. The colours are a world, and the soul element in the world of colour simply cannot exist without movement ; we ourselves, if we follow the

colours with soul-experience, must follow with movement.

People gaze open-eyed at the rainbow.\* But if you look at the rainbow with a little imagination, you may see there elemental Beings. These elemental Beings are full of activity and demonstrate it in a very remarkable manner. Here (at yellow) you see some of them streaming forth from the rainbow, continually coming away out of it. They move across and the moment they reach the lower end of the green they are drawn to it again. You see them disappear at this point (green). On the other side they come out again. To one who views it with imagination, the whole rainbow manifests a streaming-out of spirit and a disappearing of it again within. It is like a spiritual dance, in very deed a spiritual waltz, wonderful to behold. And you may observe too how these spiritual Beings come forth from the rainbow with terrible fear, and how they go in with invincible courage. When you look at the red-yellow, you see fear streaming out, and when you look at the blue-violet you have the feeling : there all is courage and bravery of heart.

Now picture to yourselves : There before me is no mere rainbow ! Beings are coming out of it and disappearing into it—here anxiety and fear, there courage . . . And now, here the rainbow receives a certain thickness and you will be able to imagine how this gives rise to the element of Water. In this watery element spiritual Beings live, Beings that are actually a kind of copy of the Beings of the Third Hierarchy.

There is no doubt about it : if we want to get near the men of real knowledge in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we must understand these things.

\*A sketch of a rainbow was made on the blackboard with chalks of the colours as seen in the sky : red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet.



Indeed we cannot even understand the men of still later times, we cannot understand Albertus Magnus, if we read him with the knowledge we have today. We must read him with a manner of knowledge that takes account of the fact that spiritual things like these were still a reality for him : only then shall we understand how he expresses himself, how he uses his words.

Thus we have, as a reflection of the Hierarchies, first Air and then Water. The Hierarchies themselves dive in, as it were—the second Hierarchy in the form of Light, the third Hierarchy in the form of Colour. And with this latter event the Moon existence is attained.

And now we come to the *Fourth Hierarchy*. (I am telling it you, remember, as it was thought of in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.) We today do not speak of the Fourth Hierarchy ; but men still spoke in that way in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. What is this Fourth Hierarchy ? It is *Man*. Man himself is the fourth Hierarchy. But by the Fourth Hierarchy was not meant the two-legged being that goes about the world today, ageing year by year ! To the true man of knowledge of those times, present-day man would have appeared as something very strange. No, in those times they spoke of original Man, of Man before the Fall, who still bore a form that gave him power over the Earth, even as the Angels and Archangels and Archai had power over the Moon existence, the second Hierarchy over the Sun existence and the first Hierarchy over the Saturn existence. They spoke of Man in his original Earthly existence and then they were right to speak of him as the Fourth Hierarchy. And with this Fourth Hierarchy came—as a gift it is true, of the higher Hierarchies, but the higher Hierarchies have held it only as a possession they did not themselves use but guarded and kept—

with the Fourth Hierarchy came *Life*. Into the world of Colour, into the iridescent world of changing colour, of which I have only been able to give you the merest hints and suggestions, came Life.

You will say : Then did nothing live before this time ? My dear friends, you can understand how it is from the human being himself. Your Ego and your astral body have not life, and yet they exist, they have being. That which is of the soul and the spirit does not need life. Life begins only with your etheric body. And the etheric body is something external, it is of the nature of a sheath. Thus only after the Moon existence and with the Earth existence does Life enter into the domain of that evolution to which our Earth belongs. *The world of moving, glancing colour is quickened to life*. And now not only do Angels and Archangels and Archai experience a longing desire to carry Darkness into Light, and Light into Darkness, thereby calling forth the play of colour in the planet ; now a desire becomes manifest to experience this play of colour as something *inward*, to feel it all inwardly ; when Darkness dominates Light, to feel weakness, laziness ; when Light dominates Darkness, to feel activity. For what is happening really, when you run ? When you run, Light predominates over Darkness in you ; when you sit and are lazy and indolent, then Darkness predominates over Light. It is a play of Colour, an activity of Colour, not physical, but of the soul. Colour permeated with Life, in its iridescence streamed-through with Life—that is what appeared with the coming of the Fourth Hierarchy, Man. And in this moment of cosmic becoming, the forces that became active in the play of colour began *to build contours*, began to fashion forms. Life, as it rounded off and moulded the colours, called into being the *hard, fast form of*

*the crystal.* And we have come into Earth existence.

Such things as I have been describing to you were fundamental truths for the mediaeval alchemists and occultists, Rosicrucians and others, who flourished—though history tells us little of them—from the ninth and tenth on into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and of whom stragglers are to be found as late as the eighteenth and even the beginning of the nineteenth century—always however in these later times regarded as strange and eccentric people. Only with the entry of the nineteenth century did this knowledge become entirely hidden. Only then did men come to acquire a conception of the world that led them to a point of view which I will indicate in the following way. Imagine, my dear friends, that here we have a man. Suppose I cease to have any interest in this man, but I take his clothes and hang them on a coat-hanger that has a knob here above like a head. From now on I take no further interest in the man and I tell myself: *There is the man!* What does it matter to me what can be put into these clothes? *That*, the coat-hanger with the clothes, is the man! This is really what happened with the Elements. It does not interest us any longer that behind Warmth or Fire is the First Hierarchy, behind Light and Air the Second Hierarchy, behind what we call Chemical Ether or Colour Ether and Water the Third Hierarchy, and behind the Life Element and Earth the Fourth Hierarchy, Man.—The peg, the hanger and on it the clothes.—That is all!

There you have the first Act of the drama. The second Act begins with Kant! One has there the hanger and the clothes hanging on it, and one begins to philosophise in true Kantian fashion as to what the “thing-in-itself” of these clothes may be. And one



comes to a realisation that the "thing-in-itself" of the clothes cannot be known. Very clever, very clever indeed ! Of course, if you first take away the man and have only the coat-hanger with the clothes, you can philosophise over the clothes, you can make most beautiful speculations ! You can either philosophise in Kantian fashion and say : "The 'thing-in-itself' cannot be known," or in the fashion of Helmholtz and think to yourself : "But these clothes, they cannot of themselves have forms ; there is nothing really there but tiny, whirling specks of dust, tiny atoms, which hit and strike each other and behold, the clothes are held in their form !"

Yes, my friends, that is the way thought has developed in recent times. It is all abstract, shadowy. And yet we live today in this way of thinking, in this way of speculating ; it gives the stamp to our whole natural-scientific outlook. And when we do not admit that we think in this atomistic way, then we do it most of all ! For we are very far from admitting that it is quite unnecessary to dream of a whirling dance of atoms, and that what we have rather to do is to *put back the man into the clothes*. This is however the very thing which the renewal of Spiritual Science must try to do.

I wanted to indicate to you today, in a number of pictures, the nature and manner of thinking in earlier centuries and what is really contained in the older writings, although it has become obscure. The very obscurity, however, has led to incidents that are not without interest. A Norwegian scientist of today has reprinted a passage from the writings of Basilius Valentinus and has interpreted it in terms of modern chemistry. He could not possibly say otherwise than that it is nonsense, because this is what it appears to be if, in the

modern sense, one thinks of a chemist standing in a laboratory, making experiments with retorts and other up-to-date apparatus. What Basilius Valentinus really gives in this passage is a fragment of embryology, expressed in pictures. That is what he gives—a fragment of embryology. According to the modern mode of thought it seems to indicate a laboratory experiment, which then proves to be nonsense. For you will not expect to reproduce the real processes of embryology in a retort—unless you be like the mediaevally minded Wagner of Goethe's *Faust*.

It is time that these things were understood. And in connection with the great truths of which I was able to speak during the Christmas Foundation Meeting, I shall have more to say concerning the spiritual life and its history during the last few centuries.

## II

### HIDDEN CENTRES OF THE MYSTERIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

YESTERDAY I began to speak to you of the spiritual-scientific strivings of the ninth–tenth century after Christ. We learnt how such strivings were still seriously followed as late as the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries ; and I endeavoured to tell you something of the content of these strivings. Today I should like to touch more on their historical aspect.

We have to remember that the Mysteries of ancient times were of such a nature and character that in the places of the Mysteries an actual meeting with the Gods was able to take place. I described in the lectures recently given at the Christmas Foundation how the human being who was an Initiate or was about to receive Initiation could verily meet with the Gods. And it was also possible, in the Mysteries, to discover places which by their very locality were expressly fitted and prepared to induce such meeting with the Gods.

The preparation of these centres and the adoption of them as the official places—if I may use so crude an expression—is at the foundation of the impulses for all the older civilisations. Gradually, however, knowledge and understanding of these places disappeared ; we may even say that from the time of the fourth century it is no longer to be found in its old form. Here and there we can still find survivals, but the knowledge is no longer so strict and exact. Notwithstanding this, however, Initiation never ceased ; it was only the form in which the candidates found their way, that changed. I



have already indicated how things were in the Middle Ages. I have told you how here and there were individuals, living simple, humble unpretentious lives, who did not gather around them a circle of official pupils in one particular place, but whose pupils were scattered in various directions in accordance with the karma of mankind or the karma of some people or nation. I have described one such instance in what I said about Johannes Tauler in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*. There is no need for me to speak about that here. I should like however to tell you of another typical example, one that had very great influence, lasting from the twelfth and thirteenth on into the fifteenth century. The spiritual streams that were working during these centuries are in large measure to be traced to the events of which I would like now to speak. Let me give you first, as it were, a sketch of the situation.

The time when these events took place is round about the year 1200 A.D. There were at that time a great number of people, especially younger people, who felt within them the urge for higher knowledge, for a union with the spiritual world—one may truthfully say, for a meeting with the Gods. And the whole situation and condition of the times was such that very often it looked as though a man who was searching and striving in this way found his teacher almost by chance. In those days one could not find a teacher by means of books, it could only come about in an entirely personal way. And often it looked from without like a chance happening, although in reality deep connections of destiny were at work in the event. And it was so in the case of the pupil of whom I am now going to tell you.

This pupil found a teacher in a place in Middle Europe through just such an apparently chance event.

He met an older man of whom he at once had the feeling : He will be able to lead me farther in that search which is the deepest impulse of my soul. And now let me give you the gist of a conversation between them. I do not of course mean that only *one* such conversation took place between teacher and pupil, but I am compressing several into one.

The pupil speaks to the teacher and tells him of his earnest desire to be able to see into the spiritual world ; but it seems to him as though the nature of man as it is in that time—it is about the twelfth century—does not allow him to penetrate to the spiritual worlds. Nevertheless, he feels that in Nature one has something that is the work, the creation of divine-spiritual Beings. When one looks at what the objects of Nature are in their deeper meaning, when one observes how the processes of Nature take their course, one cannot but recognise that behind these creations stands the working of divine-spiritual Beings. But man cannot come through to these spiritual Beings. The pupil, who was a young man somewhere between 25 and 28 or so, felt strongly and definitely that the humanity of the time, because of the kind of connection of the physical body with the soul, cannot come through, it has hindrances in itself.

The teacher began by putting him to the test. He said to him : You have your eyes, you have your ears : look with your eyes on the things of Nature, hear with your ears what goes on in Nature ; the Spiritual reveals itself through colour and through tone, and as you look and listen, you cannot help feeling how it reveals itself in these.

Then the pupil replied : Yes, but when I use my eyes, when I look out into the world, with all its colour, then it is as though my eye stops the colour, as though

the colour suddenly turns numb and cold when it reaches the eye. When I listen with my ear to tones, it is as though the sounds turn to stone in my ear ; the frozen colours and the dead, hard sounds will not let the spirit of Nature through. And the teacher said : But there is still the Revelation of the religious life. In Religion you are taught how Gods made and fashioned the world, and how the Christ entered into the evolution of time and became Man. What Nature cannot give you, does not Revelation give ?

And the pupil said : Revelation does indeed speak powerfully to my heart, but I cannot really comprehend it, I cannot connect what is out there in Nature with what Revelation says to me. It is impossible to bring them into relation with one another. And so, since I do not understand Nature, since Nature reveals nothing to me, neither do I understand the Revelation of Religion.

And the teacher made answer : I understand you well ; it is even so. If you must speak thus, if it is with your heart and soul as you say, then you, as you stand in the world today, will not be able to understand either Nature or Revelation : for you live in a body that has undergone the Fall—such was the manner of speaking in those days—and this “ fallen ” body is not suited to the earthly environment in which you are living. The earthly environment does not afford the conditions for using your senses and your feeling and your understanding in such a way that you may behold in Nature and in Revelation a light, an enlightenment that comes from the Gods. If you are willing, I will lead you away out of the Nature of your earthly environment, which is simply unsuited to your being, I will lead you away from it and give you the opportunity to understand Revelation



and Nature better. And the teacher and the pupil discussed together when this should take place.

One day, the teacher led the pupil up a high mountain, whence the surface of the Earth with its trees and flowers could no longer be seen at all—you know how this is so on high mountains—but as the pupil stood there with his teacher he could see below him as it were a sea of cloud, which completely covered the Earth with which he was familiar ; up there one was far removed from the affairs of Earth—at all events, the situation suggested this. One looked out into space with its great masses of cloud, and one saw below as it were a sea, a moving, surging sea composed entirely of cloud. Morning mist, and the breath of morning in the air ! Then the teacher began to speak to the pupil. He spoke of the wide spaces of the worlds, he spoke of the cosmic distances, of how, when one gazes out into these vastnesses in the night time, one sees the stars shining forth from thence. He told him many things, so that gradually the heart of the pupil, removed as it were far away from the Earth, became wholly given up to Nature and the manner of Nature's existence.

The preparation continued until the pupil came into a mood of soul which may be indicated by the following comparison. It was as though, not for a moment only, but for quite a long time, all that he had ever experienced during his earthly life in this incarnation were something he had dreamed. The scene now spread out before him, the rolling waves of cloud, the wide sea of cloud, with here and there a drift rising up like the crest of a wave ; the far spaces of the worlds, broken here and there by rising shapes of cloud—and scarcely even that, for there was no more than a glimpse here and there of cloud forms at the farthest end of space—this whole

scene showing so little variation, having so little content in comparison with the manifold variety of all his experiences down below on the surface of the Earth, was now for the pupil like the content of his day-waking consciousness. And everything he had ever experienced on Earth was for him no more than the memory of a dream he had dreamed. Now, *now*, so it seemed to him, he had woken up. And whilst he continued to grow more and more awake, behold, from a cleft in the rock which he had not hitherto noticed, came forth a boy of 10 or 11 years old. This boy made a strange impression upon him, for he at once recognised in him his own self in the 10th or 11th year of his age. What stood before him was the Spirit of his Youth.

You will easily guess, my dear friends, that to this scene is due one of the impulses that made me introduce into the Mystery Plays the figure of the Spirit of Johannes' Youth.\* It is the "motif" alone you must think of, certainly not of anything like photography. The Mystery Plays are no occult romances where you have but to find the key, and all is plain !

The pupil stood before the Spirit of his boyhood, his very self. He, with his 25 or 28 years, stood face to face with the Spirit of his youth. And a conversation could take place, guided by the teacher, but in reality taking place between the pupil and his own younger self. Such a conversation has a unique character ; you may see that for yourselves in the Mystery Plays, from the style that is there followed. For when a man is face to face with the Spirit of his own youth—and such a thing is always possible—then he gives something of his ripe understanding to the childlike ideas of the Spirit of his youth, and at the same time the Spirit of his youth gives

\**The Soul's Awakening. Scene 6. Four Mystery Plays.*

something of his freshness, his childlikeness, to what the man of older years possesses. The meeting becomes fruitful in a spiritual way through the very fact of this mutual interchange. And this conversation had the result that the pupil came to understand Revelation, the Revelation that is given in religion.

The conversation turned especially on Genesis, the beginning of the Old Testament, and on the Christ becoming Man. Under the guidance of the teacher and because of the special kind of fruitfulness that worked in the conversation it ended with the pupil saying these words : " Now I understand what Spirit it is that works in the Revelation. Only when one is transplanted, as it were, far away from the earthly into the heights of the Ether, there to comprehend the Ether-heights with the help of the power of childhood—this power of childhood being projected into the later years of life—only then does one understand Revelation aright. And now I understand wherefore the Gods have given to man Revelation—for the reason that men are not able, in the state in which they are on Earth, to see through the works of Nature and discover behind them the works of the Gods. Therefore did the Gods give them the Revelation which is ordinarily quite incomprehensible in the mature years of life, but which can be understood when childhood becomes real and living in the years of maturity. Thus it is really something abnormal, to understand the Revelation."

All this made a powerful impression on the pupil. And the impression remained ; he could not forget it. The Spirit of his youth vanished. The first phase of the instruction was over. A second had now to come. And the second took its course in the following way.

Once more the teacher led the pupil forth, but this



time on a different path. He did not now lead him to a mountain top, but he took him to a mountain where there was a cave, through which they passed to deep, inner clefts, going down as far as the strata of the mines. There the pupil was with the teacher in the deep places of the Earth, not now in the Ether-heights raised high above the Earth, but in the depths, far down below the surface of the Earth.

Once again it was for the consciousness of the pupil as though all that he had ever experienced on Earth went past him like dreams. For he was living down there in an environment in which his consciousness was particularly awakened to perceive his relation with the depths of the Earth. What took place for him was really none other than what lies behind such legends as are told, for example, of the Emperor Barbarossa and his life in Kyffhäuser, or of Charles the Great and his life beneath a mountain near Salzburg. It was something of this nature, that took place now, if only for a short time : it was a life in the depths of the Earth, far removed from the earthly life of man.

And again the teacher was able, by speaking with the pupil in a special way, to bring to his consciousness the fact—this time—of his union with the Earth-depths. And now there came forth out of a wall an old man, who was less recognisable to the pupil than the Spirit of his Youth, but of whom he nevertheless felt that after many years he would himself become that old man. He knew that there stood before him his own self in future old age. And now followed a similar conversation, this time between the pupil and his own older self—himself as an old man—once more a conversation under the guidance of the teacher.

What resulted from this second conversation was

different from what came from the first ; for now there began to arise within the pupil a consciousness of his own physical organisation. He felt how his blood flowed, he felt every single vein in his body ; he went with it, went with the nerve fibres ; he was made aware of all the single organs of his human organisation and the meaning and significance of each for the whole. And he felt too how all that is related to man out in the Cosmos works into him. He felt the inworking of the plant-world, in its blossoming, in its rooting ; he felt how the mineral element in the Earth works in the human organism. Down there in the depths he felt the forces of the Earth—how they are organised and how they circulate within his being ; he felt them creating there within him, undergoing change, destroying and building substances ; he felt the Earth creating, and weaving and being, in man. The result of this conversation was that when the old man, who was himself, had disappeared, the pupil could say : “ Now has the Earth, in which I have been incarnated, at last really spoken to me through her beings ; now a moment has been mine when I have seen through the things and processes of Nature, seen through them to the work of the Gods that is behind these things and processes of Nature.”

The teacher then led the pupil out again on to the Earth, and as he took leave of him, said : Behold now ! The man of today and the Earth of today are so little suited to one another that you must receive the Revelation of Religion from the Spirit of your own Youth, receiving it on the mountain high up above the Earth, and you must receive the Revelation of Nature deep below the Earth, in clefts that are far down below the surface of the Earth. And if you can succeed in

illuminating what your soul has felt in the hollow clefts of the Earth, with the light your soul has brought from the mountain, then you will attain unto wisdom.

Such was the path by which a deepening of the soul was brought about in those times—it was about the year 1200 A.D.—this is how the soul became filled with wisdom. The pupil of whom I have told you was thereby brought verily to Initiation, and he now knew what power he must put forth in his soul to arouse to activity the light of the heights and the feeling of the depths. Further instruction was then given him by the teacher, showing him how self-knowledge really always consists in this :—one perceives on the one hand that which lies high above Earth-man, and on the other hand that which lies deep below Earth-man : these two must meet in man's own inner being. Then does man find within his own being the power of God the Creator.

The Initiation that I have described to you is a characteristic example of the Initiations which led afterwards to what we may designate as “ mediaeval Mysticism.” It was a mysticism that sought for self-knowledge, but always in order to find in the self the way to the divine. In later times this mysticism became abstract. The concrete union with the external world, as it was given for these pupils who were carried up into the Ether-heights and down into the Earth-depths, was no longer sought for. Consequently there was not the same deep stirring of the soul, nor did the whole experience attain to such a degree of intensity. And yet there was still the search, there was still the inner impulse to seek within for the God, for God the Creator. Fundamentally speaking, all the seeking and striving of Meister Eckhart, of Johannes Tauler and of the later mystics whom I have described in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*.



owes its impulse to these earlier mediaeval Initiates.

Those who worked faithfully in the sense of such mediaeval forms of Initiation were however very much misunderstood, and it is by no means easy for us to find out what these pupils of the mediaeval Initiates were really like.

It is, as you know, possible to come a considerable distance along the path into the spiritual world. Those who follow thoroughly and actively what is given in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* do find the way into the spiritual worlds. Everything that has been physically real in the past is of course only to be found now by way of the spiritual world—therefore also such scenes as I have now described, for there are no material documents that record such scenes. There are however regions of the spiritual world which are hard of access even for a very advanced stage of spiritual power. In order to research into these regions, we must have come to the point of actually having intercourse with the Beings of the spiritual world, in a quite simple, natural way, as we have with men on Earth. When we have attained so far, we shall come to perceive and understand the connection between these Initiates of whom I have told you, and their pupils, e.g., such a pupil as Raimon Lull, who lived from 1235 to 1315 and who, in what history can tell of him, seems to leave us full of doubts and questions.

What you can learn of Raimon Lull by studying historical documents is indeed very scanty. But if you are able to enter into a *personal relationship* with Raimon Lull—you will allow me to use the expression : perhaps, in the light of all I have been telling you lately, it will not sound so paradoxical to you after all—if you are able to do this, then he shows himself to you as someone

quite different from what the historical documents make him out to be. For he shows himself to be pre-eminently a personality who, under the influence and inspiration of the very Initiate of whom I have spoken to you as the "pupil," made the resolve to use all his power to bring about a renewal in his own time of the *Mysteries of the Word*, of the Logos, as they had been in olden times. He set himself to renew the Mysteries of the Logos by means of that self-knowledge for which so powerful an impulse was working in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The so-called *Ars Magna* of Raimon Lull is to be adjudged from this point of view. He said to himself: When man speaks, then we really have in speech a microcosm. That which man utters in speech is in truth the whole man, concentrated in the organs of speech; the secret and mystery of each single word is to be sought in the whole human being, and therefore in the world, in the Cosmos.

And so the idea came to Raimon Lull that one must look for the secret of speech first in the human being, by diving down, as it were, from the speech organs into the whole organism of the human being; and then in the Cosmos, for the whole human organism is to be explained and understood out of the Cosmos. Let us suppose, for example, we want to understand the true significance of the sound A (as in "father"). The point is that the sound A, which comes about through the forming and shaping of the outgoing breath, depends on a certain inner attitude of the etheric body, which you can easily learn to know today. Eurhythmies will show it you; for this attitude of the etheric body is carried over in Eurhythmies to the physical body and becomes the Eurhythmic movement for the sound A.

All this was not by any means fully clear to Raimon Lull; with him it was more of a dim, intuitive feeling.

He did however get so far as to follow the inner attitude or gesture of the human being out into the Cosmos and say, for example : If you look in the direction of the constellation of the Lion (Leo), and then look in the direction of the Balance (Libra), the connection between the two lines of vision will give you A. Or again, turn your eye in the direction of Saturn. Saturn stops your line of vision, comes in the way. And if Saturn, for example, stands in front of the Ram (Aries), you have, as it were, to go round the Ram with Saturn. And then you have from out of the Cosmos the feeling of O.\*

From ideas like these, though dimly perceived, Raimon Lull went on to find certain geometrical figures, the corners and sides of which he named with the letters of the alphabet. And he was quite sure that when one experiences a feeling and impulse to draw lines in the figures—diagonals, for instance, across a pentagon, uniting the five points in different ways—then one has to see in these lines different combinations of sounds, which combinations of sounds express certain secrets of the World-All, of the Cosmos. Thus did Raimon Lull look for a kind of renaissance of the secrets of the Logos, as they were known and spoken of in the Ancient Mysteries. You will find it all quite misrepresented in the historical documents. When however one enters little by little into a personal relationship with Raimon Lull, then one comes to see how in all these efforts he was trying to solve once more the riddle of the Cosmic Word. And it is a fact that the pupils of the mediaeval Initiates continued for several centuries to spend their lives in endeavours of this kind. It was an intensive striving, first to immerse oneself in man, and then to

\*Readers unfamiliar with the movements in Eurhythmly for the sounds of speech, are recommended to turn to the first three chapters of the book *Eurhythmly as Visible Speech* (15 lectures) by Rudolf Steiner.



come forth as it were, to rise out of the human being into the secrets of the Cosmos.

Thus did these wise men—for we may truly call them so—seek to unite Revelation with Nature. They believed—and much of their belief was well-founded—that in this way they could come behind the Revelation of Religion and behind the Revelation of Nature. For it was quite clear to them that man, as he is now living on the Earth, was destined and intended to become the Fourth Hierarchy, but that he has “fallen” from his true and proper nature, and become more deeply involved in physical existence than he should be, thereby at the same time losing the power adequately to develop his soul and spirit. It was from such strivings that there arose, later on, what we know as the Rosicrucian Movement.

It was at a place of instruction of the Rosicrucians, of the first, original Rosicrucians, that the scene I have depicted to you today, the scene between the teacher and the pupil, at first upon a high mountain and then down in a deep cleft of the Earth, emerged like a kind of *Fata Morgana*, came again as it were like a ghost, reflected within a Rosicrucian school as knowledge. And it taught the pupils to recognise how man has by inner effort and striving to attain to two things, if he would come to a true self-knowledge, if he would find again his adjustment to the Earth and be able at last to become in actual reality a member of the Fourth Hierarchy. For within the Rosicrucian School the possibility was given to recognise what it was that had taken place with the pupil when he had seen before him in bodily form the Spirit of his Youth. A loosening of the astral body had taken place ; the astral body, that was stronger at that moment than it otherwise ever is in

life, was loosened. And in this loosening of the astral body the pupil had come to know the meaning and significance of Revelation. And again, what took place with the pupil in the depths of the Earth was also made clear and comprehensible in the Rosicrucian School. This time the astral body was drawn right back within. It was contracted and drawn together, so that the pupil was able to perceive and apprehend the certainty of man's own inner being.

And now exercises were found within Rosicrucianism, comparatively simple exercises, consisting in symbolic figures, to which one gave oneself up in devotion and meditation. The force and power of which the soul became possessed through devotion to these figures, enabled the students on the one hand to loosen the astral body and become like the pupil on the mountain top in the Ether-heights, and on the other hand, through the compression and contraction of the astral body, to become like the pupil in the clefts of the Earth. And it was then possible, without the help, as before, of external environment, simply through performing a powerful inner exercise, to enter into the inner being of man.

I have given you here a picture of something to which I have made a slight allusion in my preface to the new edition of the book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*. I said there that what we find in Meister Eckhart, in Johannes Tauler, in Nicolas Cusa, in Valentine Wiegel and the rest, is a late product of a great and mighty striving of mankind, an earlier, original striving that preceded them all. And this earlier striving in the Spirit, this search for self-knowledge, in connection on the one hand with Revelation and on the other hand with the illumination of Nature—I wanted to show you today how this is one

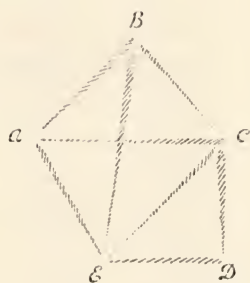
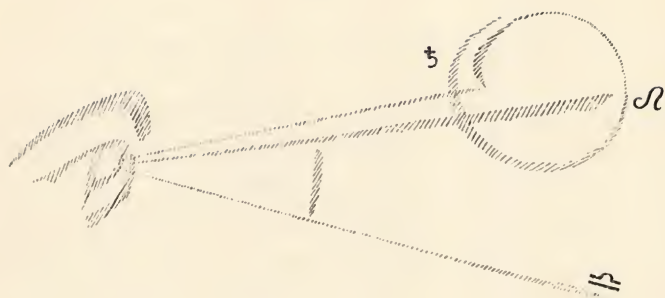
of the currents that take their course in the so-called "Dark Ages."

The man of modern times conjures darkness into the Middle Ages out of his own imagination. In reality there were in those times many enlightened spirits, of such a kind however, that the "enlightened" spirits of today cannot understand their light and consequently remain in the dark.

It is indeed characteristic of modern times, that men take light for darkness and darkness for light. If however we can look into what lies behind the literature of those earlier times and are able to see that of which the literature gives only a dim reflection, then we may receive a powerful and lasting impression.

Something of this I wanted to show you today: tomorrow we will complete the picture.





*Raimond Lull 1235-1315*

*Ars Magna.*

### III

#### THE TIME OF TRANSITION

I SPOKE to you yesterday of the special form in which the results of research in the realm of spiritual knowledge were communicated in the Middle Ages. This form was, so to speak, the last Act before a door was shut for the evolution of the spirit of man, a door that had been open for many centuries and given entrance by way of natural gift and faculty into the spiritual world. The door was shut when the time came for man, so far as his instinctive faculties were concerned, to be placed outside the kingdom of the divine-spiritual Will that ruled over him. From that time forward he had to find in his own inmost being, in his own will, the possibility to evolve conscious freedom in the soul.

All the great moves of evolution, however, take place slowly, gradually, step by step. And the experience that had been attained by the pupil when the teacher led him up into the Ether-heights and down into the deep clefts of the Earth—even in those times it was no longer possible in the form it had taken in the ancient Mysteries—this experience was now, in later times, directly connected with an experience of Nature (though not with Nature on the Earth's surface itself) which came to man in a more unconscious form.

Think for a moment how it was with those persons who strove after knowledge about the year 1200 and on through the following century. They heard tell how, only a short time before, pupils were still able to find teachers, like the one of whom I told you yesterday ;

but they themselves were directed to human thinking as the means of attaining knowledge.

In the succeeding time of the Middle Ages we can see this human thinking developing and spreading, asserting itself in an impressive manner. It sets out on new paths with inner zeal, with sincere and whole-hearted devotion, and these paths are followed by large circles of knowledge-seekers. What we may truly call the knowledge of the Spiritual, that too continued its way. And after a few centuries we come to the time when Rosicrucianism proper was founded. Rosicrucianism is connected with a change that took place in the whole spiritual world in respect of man. I shall best describe the change by giving you once again a picture.

Mysteries in the old sense of the word were no longer possible in the time of which I have been speaking. There were however men who yearned for knowledge in the sense of the ancient Mysteries, and who experienced hard and heavy conflicts of soul when they heard how in the past men had been led up to the mountain and down to the clefts of the Earth, and had thus found knowledge. They developed all possible inner methods, they made all possible inner efforts in order to rouse the soul within them, that it might after all yet find the way. And he who is able to see such things can find in those times, as we said just now, not places of the Mysteries, but gatherings of knowledge-seekers who met together in an atmosphere warmed through and through with the glow of piety. What appears later as Rosicrucianism, sound and genuine Rosicrucianism, as well as the debased and charlatan kinds, comes in reality from men who gathered together in this simple way and sought so to temper their souls that genuine spiritual knowledge might yet be able to arise for them. In such a



gathering, that took place in most unpretentious surroundings, the simple living-room of a kind of manor house, a few persons were once met, who, through certain exercises half thoughtful and meditative in character, half of the nature of prayer, done in common by them all, had developed a mystical mood in which all shared. It was the same mystical mood of soul that was cultivated in later times by the so-called "Brothers of the Common Life," and later still by the followers of Comenius and by many other Brotherhoods. In this small circle, however, it showed itself with a peculiar intensity, and whilst these few men were there gathered together, making devotion, so to say, of their ordinary consciousness, of their whole intellect, in this intense mystical atmosphere of soul, it happened that a being came to them, not a being of flesh and blood like the teacher whom the pupil met and who led him to the mountains and to the clefts of the Earth, but a being who was only able to appear in an etheric body in this little company of men. This being revealed himself as the same who had guided the pupil about the year 1200. He was now in the after-death state. He had descended to these men from the spiritual world ; they had drawn him thither by the mood of soul that prevailed in them—mystical, meditative, pious.

My dear friends, in order that no misunderstanding may arise, let me expressly emphasise that there is here no question of any mediumistic power. The little company who were gathered there would have looked upon any use—or any sanctioning—of mediumistic powers, as deeply sinful ; they would have been led to do so by certain ideas belonging to old and honoured tradition. Just in those very communities of which I am telling you, mediumship and all that is related to it was

regarded not merely as harmful but as sinful—and for the following reason. These persons knew that mediumship goes together with a peculiar constitution of the physical body ; they knew that it is the physical body that gives the medium his spiritual powers. But the physical body they looked upon as “fallen,” and information that came by the help of mediumship they could not but regard under all circumstances as acquired by the help of Ahrimanic or Luciferic powers.

In those times, things like this were still clearly and exactly known. And so we have not to think of anything mediumistic in this connection. There was the mood of mysticism and meditation, and that alone. And it was the enhancing and strengthening of this mood through fellowship of soul, that, so to speak, enchanted into the circle, but of his own free-will, that disembodied human being, purely spiritual, and yet at the same time human.

The being spoke to them thus, in a deeply solemn manner.—“You are not altogether prepared for my appearance but I am among you discarnate, without physical body, forasmuch as a time has come when for a short period of Earth existence the Initiate of olden times is unable to appear in a physical body. The time will come again when he can do so, when the Michael period begins. But I am come to reveal to you that the inner being of man nevertheless remains unchanged, that the inner being of man, if it holds itself aright, can yet find the way to the divine-spiritual existence. For a period of time, however, the human intellect and understanding will be so constituted that it will have to be suppressed in order for that which is of the Spirit to be able to speak to the human soul. Therefore remain in your mystic and pious mood of soul . . . You have received from me, all of you together, the picture, the

imagination. I have, however, been able to give you no more than a mere indication of that which will come to fulfilment within you ; you will go on further and find a continuation of what you have here experienced ! ”—

And now, three from the number gathered there together, were chosen, to the end that they might establish a special union with the spiritual world, once more not at all through any kind of mediumistic powers but through a development of that mystic, meditative, pious mood of soul. These three, who were guarded and protected by the rest of the circle, closely and intimately cared for by the others, experienced from time to time a kind of absence of mind. They were at these times, in their external bodily nature, wonderfully lovely and beautiful, they acquired a sort of shining countenance, shining like the sun, and they wrote down, in symbols, revelations which they received from the spiritual world. These symbolic revelations were the first pictures by which the Rosicrucians were shown where it behoved them to know of the spiritual world. The revelations contained a kind of philosophy, a kind of theology and also a kind of medicine.

And the remarkable thing was that the others (it seems to me as though the others were four in number, so that the whole was a company of seven), after the experience they had with their brothers, beholding how their eyes shone like the sun and how their countenances were bright and radiant—these other four were able to give again in ordinary language what was conveyed in the symbols. The brothers whose destiny it was to bring the symbols from the spiritual world, could only write down the symbols, they could only say, when they returned again into their ordinary consciousness : “ We



have been among the stars, and have found the old teachers of the secret knowledge." They could not themselves turn the symbolic pictures that they drew, into ordinary human speech. The others could and did. And this is the source of a great deal of knowledge that passed over into the literature of theology, more particularly such as was philosophical in character (not the theology of the Church but rather of the laity) and into the literature of medicine. And what was thus received from the spiritual world in symbols was afterwards communicated to small groups that were organised by the first Rosicrucians.

Again and again, in the time from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, there was still the possibility in certain very small groups for experiences of this nature. Revelations came frequently to men from the spiritual world in this or some similar way. But those who had to translate what was thus revealed in pictures were not always capable of doing it quite faithfully. Hence the want of clarity in the philosophy of this period. One has to discover for oneself what it really means, by seeking for it again in the world of the Spirit. For those however who have had knowledge of this kind of revelation received from the spiritual world, it has always been possible to link on to such revelations.

But picture to yourselves, my dear friends, what strange feelings must gradually have come over these men, who had to receive the very highest knowledge—for what was given to them was so accounted—from a direction that was growing more and more foreign, almost uncanny, to them ; for they could no longer see into the world out of which the secrets came to them ; ordinary consciousness could not reach so far.

It can readily be understood that such things easily

led to charlatanism and even to fraud. Indeed at no time of human evolution have charlatanism and the highest and purest of revelation stood so close to one another as in this period. It is difficult to distinguish the true from the false—so much so that many regard the whole of Rosicrucianism as charlatan. One can understand this, for the true Rosicrucians are extraordinarily hard to find among the charlatans, and the whole matter is all the more difficult and problematic for the reason that one has always to bear in mind that the spiritual revelation comes from sources which in their real quality and nature remain hidden.

The small circles gathered by the first Rosicrucians grew to a larger brotherhood, who always went about unrecognised, appearing here and there in the world, generally with the calling of a physician, healing the sick, and at the same time spreading knowledge as they went. And it was so that in regard to very much of this knowledge, the spreading of it was not without a certain embarrassment, inasmuch as the men who carried it on were not able to speak of the connection in which they stood to the spiritual world.

But now something else was developed in this pursuit of spiritual knowledge and spiritual research, something that is of very great beauty. There were the three brethren and the four. The three are only able to attain their goal when the four work together with them. The two groups are absolutely interdependent. The three receive the revelations from the spiritual world, the four are able to translate them into ordinary human language. What the three give would be nothing but quite unintelligible pictures, if the four were not able to translate them. And again, the four would have nothing to translate, if the three did not receive their revelations,

in picture form, from the spiritual world. This gave rise to the development within such communities of an inner brotherhood of soul, a brotherhood in knowledge and in spiritual life, which in some circles of those times was held to be among the very highest of human attributes. Such small groups of men did indeed learn to know through their striving the true worth of brotherhood. And gradually they came more and more to feel how the evolution of humanity towards freedom is such that the bond between men and Gods would be completely severed were it not kept whole by such brotherhood, where the one looks to the other, where the one is in very truth dependent on the other.

We have here a picture of something in the soul which is wonderfully beautiful. And much that was written in those days possesses a certain charm which we only understand when we know how this atmosphere of brotherhood which permeated the spiritual life of many circles in Europe in those times, shed its radiant light into the writings.

There is however another mood that we find in those who are striving for knowledge, and this mood began gradually to pervade their whole endeavours and made people anxious. If in those times one did not approach the sources of spiritual revelation, ultimately it was so that one could no longer know whether these revelations were good or evil. And a certain anxiety began to be felt in regard to some of the influences. The anxiety spread later over large circles of people, who came to have fear, intense fear of all knowledge.

The development of the mood of which I speak may be particularly well studied in the examples of two men. One is Raimund of Sabunda, who lived in the fifteenth century, being born about 1430. Raimund of Sabunda



is a remarkable man. If you study carefully what remains to us of his thought, then you will have the feeling : This is surely almost the very same revelation that was communicated in full consciousness about the year 1200 by the teacher who took his pupil to the mountain tops and to the chasms of the Earth ! Only in Raimund of Sabunda of the fifteenth century, it is all given in a vague, impersonal style, philosophical in character, theological too and medical. The truth is that Raimund of Sabunda had also received his revelations by way of the genuine Rosicrucians, that is to say, by the path that had been opened by the great Initiate of the twelfth century, whose work and influence I described to you yesterday, and who continued to inspire men from out of the spiritual world, as I have been relating to you today. For the revelation that afterwards came through Rosicrucianism, as I have often described to you, came originally from this great Initiate and those who were with him in the spiritual world ; the mood and feeling of the whole teaching was set by him. Anxiety, however, was at this time beginning to take hold of men. Now Raimund of Sabunda was a bold, brave spirit, he was one of those men who can value ideas, who understand how to live in ideas. And so, although we notice in him a certain vagueness due to the fact that the revelations have their source after all in the spiritual world, yet in him we find no trace of anxiety or fear in regard to knowledge.

All the more striking is another and very characteristic example of that spiritual stream : Pico della Mirandola, who also belongs to the fifteenth century.

The short-lived Pico della Mirandola is a very remarkable figure. If you study deeply the fruits of his thought and contemplation, you will see how the same initiative I have just described is everywhere active in them, due to the

continuation of the wisdom of that old Initiate by way of the Rosicrucian stream. But in Pico della Mirandola you will observe a kind of shrinking back before this knowledge. Let me give you an instance. He established how everything that happens on Earth—stones and rock coming into being, plants living and growing and bearing fruit, animals living their life—how all this cannot be attributed to the forces of the *Earth*. If anyone were to think : There is the Earth, and the forces of the Earth produce that which is on the Earth, he would have quite a wrong notion of the matter. The true view, according to Pico della Mirandola, is that up there are the *Stars* and what happens in the Earth is dependent on the Stars. One must look up to the Heavens, if one wants to understand what happens on Earth. Speaking in the sense of Pico della Mirandola we should have to say : You give me your hand, my brother man, but it is not your feeling alone that is the cause why you give me your hand, it is the star standing over you that gives you the impulse to hold out your hand to me. Ultimately everything that is brought about has its source in the Heavens, in the Cosmos ; what happens on Earth is but the reflection of what happens in the Heavens.

Pico della Mirandola gives expression to this as his firm conviction, and yet at the same time he says : But it is not for man to look up to these causes in the stars, he has only to take account of the immediate cause on Earth.

From this point of view Pico della Mirandola combats—and it is most characteristic that he does so—the Astrology that he finds prevalent. He knows well that the old, real and genuine Astrology expresses itself in the destinies of men. He knows that ; it is for him a truth. And yet he says : one should not pursue Astrology, one should look only for the immediate causes.

Note well what it is we have before us here. For the first time we are confronted with the idea of "boundaries" to knowledge. The idea shows itself in a significant manner, it is still, shall we say, human in character. Later, in Kant, in du Bois-Reymond, you will find expressed in them : "Man cannot cross the boundaries of knowledge." The idea is said to rest on an inner necessity. That is not the case with Pico della Mirandola in the fifteenth century. He says : "What is on Earth, has undoubtedly come about through cosmic causes. But man is called upon to forgo the attainment of a knowledge of these cosmic causes ; he has to limit himself to the Earth." Thus we have in the fifteenth century, in such a markedly characteristic person as Pico della Mirandola, voluntary renunciation of the highest knowledge.

My dear friends, we have here a spiritual event in the history of culture of the greatest imaginable importance. Men made the resolve : We will renounce knowledge ! And that which comes to pass externally in such a person as Pico della Mirandola has once more, in very deed and fact, its counterpart in the Spiritual.

It was again in one of those simple gatherings of Rosicrucians that in the second half of the fifteenth century, on the occasion of a ritual arranged for this very purpose, man's Star-knowledge was in deeply solemn manner offered up in sacrifice. What took place in that ritual, which was enacted in all the solemnity proper to such a festival, may be expressed as follows.—Men stood before a kind of altar and said : "We resolve now to feel ourselves responsible not for ourselves alone nor our community, nor our nation, nor even only for the men of our time ; we resolve to feel ourselves responsible for all men who have ever lived on Earth, to feel that we



belong to the whole of mankind. And we feel that mankind has deserted the rank of the Fourth Hierarchy and has descended too deeply into matter" (for the Fall into Sin was understood in this sense) "and in order that man may be able to return to the rank of the Fourth Hierarchy, may be able to find for himself in freedom of will what in earlier times Gods have tried to find for him and with him, let now the higher knowledge be offered up for a season !"

And certain Beings of the spiritual world, who are not of human kind, who do not come to Earth in human incarnation, accepted the sacrifice in order to fulfil there-with certain purposes in the spiritual world. It would take us too far to speak of these here ; we will do so another time. But the *impulse to freedom* was thereby made possible for man from out of the spiritual world.

I tell you of this ritual in order to show you how everything that takes place in the external life of the physical senses has its spiritual counterpart ; we have only to look for it in the right place. For it can happen that such a celebration, enacted—I will not say in this instance, with full knowledge, but enacted by persons who stand in connection with the spiritual world—may have very deep meaning ; from it can radiate impulses for a whole culture or a whole stream of civilisation. Whoever wants to know the fundamental colouring and tone of a particular epoch of time must look for that source in the Spiritual whence spring the forces that stream through this epoch of time.

In the years that followed, whatever came into being of a truly spiritual nature, was an echo of this creative working from out of the unknown spiritual worlds. And side by side with the external materialism that developed in the succeeding centuries, we can always find individual

spirits who lived under the influence of that renunciation of the higher knowledge.

I should like to give you a brief description of a type of man who might be met with from the fifteenth century onwards through the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. You might find him in some country village as a herb-gatherer for an apothecary, or in some other simple calling. If one takes an interest in special forms and manifestations of the being of man as they show themselves in this or that individuality, then one may meet and recognise such a person. At first he is extraordinarily reserved, speaks but little, perhaps even turns away your attention from what you are trying to find in him by talking in a trivial manner, on purpose to make you think it is not worth while to converse with him. If, however, you know better than to look merely at the *content* of the words a man says, if you know how to hear the ring of the words, how to listen to the way the words come out of a man, then you will go on listening to such a one, despite all discouragement. And if out of some karmic connection he receives the impression that he really should speak to you, then he will begin to speak, carefully and guardedly. And you will make the discovery that he is a kind of wise man. But what he says is not earthly wisdom. Neither is there contained in it much of what we now call spiritual science. But they are warm words of the heart, far-reaching moral teachings ; nor is there anything sentimental about his way of uttering them, he speaks them rather as proverbs.

He might say something like this. "Let us go over to yonder fir-tree. My soul can creep into the needles and cones, for my soul is everywhere. From the cones and needles of the fir-tree, my soul sees through them, looks out into the deeps and distances of the worlds

beyond ; and then I become one with the whole world. That is the true piety, to become one with the whole world. Where is God? God is in every fir-cone. And he who does not recognise God in every fir-cone, he who sees God somewhere else than in every fir-cone—he does not know the true God.”

I want only to describe to you *how* these men spoke, men that you might find in the way I have described. Such was their manner of speaking. And they might go on to say more. “Yes, and when one creeps into the fir-cones and into the needles of the fir-tree, then one finds how the God rejoices over the human beings in the world. And when one descends deep down into one’s own heart, into the abysses of the innermost of man’s nature, there also one finds the God ; but then one learns to know how He is made sad through the sinfulness of men.”

In such wise spake these simple sages. A great number of them possessed—to speak in modern language—“editions” of the geometrical figures of the old Rosicrucians. These they would show to those who approached them in the right way. When however they spoke about these figures—which were no more than quite simple, even poor, impressions—then the conversation would unfold in a strange manner. There were many people who, although they took interest in the unpretentious wise man before them, were at the same time overcome with curiosity as to what these strange Rosicrucian pictures really meant, and asked about them. But they received from these wise men, who were often regarded as eccentric, no clear and exact answer ; they received only the advice : If one attains the right deepening of soul, then one can see through these figures, as through a window, into the spiritual world.



The wise men would give as it were a description of what they themselves had been able to feel and experience from the figures rather than any explanation or interpretation of them. And often it was so, that when one had heard these expressions of feeling in connection with the figures, one could not put them into *thought* at all ; for these simple sages did not give thoughts. What they gave, however, had an after-working that was of immense significance. One left these men, not only with warmth in one's soul, but with the feeling : I have received a knowledge that lives in me, a knowledge I can by no means enclose in thoughts and concepts.

That was one of the ways in which, during this period from the fourteenth, fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the nature of the Divine and the nature of the Human, what God is and what Man is, was taught and made known to man through feeling. We cannot quite say, without words, but we can say, without ideas, although not on that account without content.

In this period much intercourse went on among men by means of a silencing of thought. No one can arrive at a true conception of the character of this period who does not know how much was brought to pass in those days through this silencing of thought, when men interchanged not mere words but their very souls.

I have given you, my dear friends, a picture of one of the features of that time of transition when freedom was first beginning to flourish among men. I shall have more to say on this from many aspects. For the moment, taking my start from all that took place at the Christmas Foundation Meeting, I wanted here to add something further to what was given then.

## IV

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF EARTHLY MAN TO THE SUN

#### Heart-Knowledge and the Attitude of the Rosicrucian Schools

WHAT I have been telling you in recent lectures requires to be carried a little further. I have tried to give you a picture of the flow of spiritual knowledge through the centuries, and of the form it has taken in recent times, and I have been able to show how from the fifteenth until the end of the eighteenth or even the beginning of the nineteenth century, the spiritual knowledge that was present before that period as clear and concrete albeit instinctive knowledge, showed itself in this later age more in a devotion of heart and soul to the Spiritual, to all that is of the Spirit in the world.

We have seen how the knowledge man possessed of Nature and of how the spiritual world works in Nature, is still present in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In a personality like Agrippa of Nettesheim, whom I have described in my book *Mysticism and Modern Thought*, we have one who was still fully possessed of the knowledge, for example, that in the several planets of our system are spiritual Beings of quite definite character and kind.

In his writings, Agrippa of Nettesheim assigns to each single planet what he calls the *Intelligence* of the planet. This points to traditions which were still extant from olden times, and even in his day were something more than traditions. To look up to a planet in the way that

became customary in later Astronomy and is still customary today, would have been utterly impossible to a man like Agrippa of Nettesheim. The external planet, nay, every external star was no more than a sign, an announcement, so to say, of the presence of spiritual Beings, to whom one could look up with the eye of the soul, when one looked in the direction of the star. And Agrippa of Nettesheim knew that the Beings who are united with the single stars are the Beings who rule the inner existence of the star or the planet, rule also the movements of the planet in the Universe, the whole activity of the particular star. And such Beings he called : the Intelligence of the star.

Agrippa knew also how, at the same time, hindering Beings work from the star, Beings who undermine the good deeds of the star. They too work from out of the star and also into it ; and these Beings he called *Demons* of the star. And together with this knowledge went an understanding of the Earth, that saw in the Earth too a heavenly body having its Intelligence and its Demon. The understanding however for star Intelligence and star Demonology was little by little completely lost, with all that was involved in it. What was essentially involved in it may be expressed in the following way.

The Earth was of course looked upon as ruled in her inner activity, in her movement in the Cosmos, by Intelligences whom one could bring together under the name of the Intelligence of the Earth star. But what was the Intelligence of the Earth star, for the men of Agrippa's time ? It is exceedingly difficult today even to speak of these things, because the ideas of men have travelled very far away from what was accepted as a matter of course in those times by men of insight and understanding. The Intelligence of the Earth star was *Man*



himself, the human being as such. They saw in Man a being who had received a task from the Spirituality of the Worlds, not merely, as modern man imagines, to walk about on the Earth, or to travel about it in trains, to buy and sell, to write books, and so forth and so forth—no, they conceived Man as a being to whom the World-Spirit had given the task to rule and regulate the Earth, to bring law and order into all that has to do with the place of the Earth in the Cosmos. Their conception of Man was expressed by saying : Through what he is, through the forces and powers he bears within his being, Man gives to the Earth the impulse for her movement around the Sun, for her movement further in Universal Space.

There was in very truth still a feeling for this. It was known that the task had once been allotted to Man, that Man had really been made the Lord of the Earth by the World-Spirituality, but in the course of his evolution had not shown himself equal to the task, had fallen from his high estate. When men are speaking of knowledge nowadays it is very seldom that one hears even a last echo of this view. What we find in religious belief concerning the Fall really goes back ultimately to this idea ; for there the point is that originally Man had quite another position on the Earth and in the Universe from the position he takes today ; he has fallen from his high estate. Setting aside however this religious conception and considering the realm of thought, where men think they have knowledge that they have attained by definite and correct methods, it is only here and there that we can still find today an echo of the ancient knowledge that once proceeded from instinctive clairvoyance, and that was well aware of Man's task and of his Fall into his present narrow limitations.

It may still happen, for example, that one may have a conversation with a person—I am here relating facts—who has thought very deeply, who has also acquired very deep knowledge concerning this or that matter in the spiritual realm. The conversation turns on whether Man, as he stands on Earth today, is really a creature who is self-contained, who carries his whole being and nature within him. And such a personality as I have described will say to you, that this cannot be. Man must really in his nature be a far more comprehensive being—otherwise he could not have the striving he has now, he could not develop the great idealism of which we can see such fine and lofty examples ; in his true nature Man must be a great and comprehensive being, who has somehow or other committed a cosmic sin, as a consequence of which he has been banished within the limits of this present earthly existence, so that today he is really sitting imprisoned as it were in a cage. You may still meet with this view here and there as a late straggler, as it were. But speaking generally, where shall we find one who accounts himself a scientist, who seriously occupies himself with these great and far-reaching questions? And yet it is only by facing them that man can ever find his way to an existence worthy of him as man.

It was, then, really so that Man was regarded as the bearer of the Intelligence of the Earth. But now, a person like Agrippa of Nettesheim ascribed to the Earth also a Demon. When we go back to the twelfth or thirteenth century, we find this Demon of the Earth to be a Being who could only become what he became on the Earth, because he found in Man the tool for his activity.

In order to understand this, we must acquaint ourselves with the way men thought about the relationship of the Earth to the Sun, or of Earthly man to the Sun,

in those days. And if I am now to describe to you how they understood this relationship, then I must again speak in Imaginations : for these things will not suffer themselves to be confined in abstract concepts. Abstract concepts came later, and they are very far from being able to span the truth ; we have therefore to speak in pictures, in Imaginations.

Although, as I have described in my *Outline of Occult Science*, the Sun separated itself from the Earth, or rather separated the Earth off from itself, it is nevertheless the original abode of Man. For ever since the beginning of the Saturn existence Man was united with the whole planetary system including the Sun. Man has not his home on Earth, he has on Earth only a temporary resting place. He is in truth, according to the view that prevailed in those olden times, a Sun-being. He is united in his whole being and existence with the Sun. And since this is so, he ought as a being of the Sun to stand quite differently on the Earth than he actually does. He ought to stand on the Earth in such a way that it should suffice for the Earth to have the impulse to bring forth the seed of Man in etheric form from out of the mineral and plant kingdoms, and the Sun then to fructify the seed brought forth from the Earth. Thence should arise the etheric human form, which should itself establish its own relationship to the physical substances of the Earth, and itself take on Earth substantiality. The contemporaries of Agrippa of Nettesheim—Agrippa's own knowledge was, unfortunately, somewhat clouded, but better contemporaries of his did really hold the view that Man ought not to be born in the earthly way he now is, but Man ought really to come to being in his etheric body through the interworking of Sun and Earth, and only afterwards, going about the Earth as an etheric



being, give himself earthly form. The seeds of Man should grow up out of the Earth with the purity of plant-life, appearing here and there as ethereal fruits of the Earth, darkly shining ; these should then in a certain season of the year be overshadowed, as it were, by the light of the Sun, and thereby assume human form, but etheric still ; then Man should draw to himself physical substance—not from the body of the mother, but from the Earth and all that is thereon, incorporating it into himself from the kingdoms of the Earth. Thus—they thought—should have been the manner of Man's appearance on the Earth, in accordance with the purposes of the Spirit of the Worlds.

And the development that came later was due to the fact that Man had allowed to awaken within him too deep an urge, too intense a desire for the earthly and material. Thereby he forfeited his connection with the Sun and the Cosmos, and could only find his existence on Earth in the form of the stream of inheritance. Thereby, however, the Demon of the Earth began his work ; for the Demon of the Earth would not have been able to do anything with men who were Sun-born. When Sun-born man came to dwell on the Earth, he would have been in very truth the Fourth Hierarchy. And one would have had to speak of Man in the following manner. One would have had to say : *First Hierarchy* : Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones ; *Second Hierarchy* : Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes ; *Third Hierarchy* : Angels, Archangels, Archai ; *Fourth Hierarchy* : Man—three different shades or gradations of the human, but none the less making the Fourth Hierarchy.

But because Man gave rein to his strong impulses in the direction of the physical, he became, not the being on the lowest branch, as it were, of the Hierarchies, but

instead the being at the summit of the highest branch of the earthly kingdoms : mineral kingdom, plant kingdom, animal kingdom, human kingdom. This was the picture of how Man stood in the world.

Moreover, because Man does not find his proper task on the Earth, the Earth herself has not her right and worthy position in the Cosmos. For since Man has fallen, the true Lord of the Earth is not there. What has happened ? The true Lord of the Earth is not there, and it became necessary for the Earth, not being governed from herself in her place in the Cosmos, to be ruled from the Sun ; so that the tasks that should really be carried out on Earth fell to the Sun. The man of mediaeval times looked up to the Sun and said : In the Sun are certain Intelligences. They determine the movement of the Earth in the Cosmos ; they govern what happens on the Earth. Man ought, in reality, to do this ; the Sun-forces ought to work on Earth *through Man* for the existence of the Earth. Hence that significant mediaeval conception that was expressed in the words : The Sun, the unlawful Prince of this world.

And now reflect, my dear friends, how infinitely the Christ Impulse was deepened through such conceptions. The Christ became, for these mediaeval men, the Spirit Who was not willing to find His further task on the Sun, Who would not remain among those who directed the Earth in unlawful manner from without. He wanted to take His path from the Sun to the Earth, to enter into the destiny of Man and the destiny of Earth, to experience Earth events and pass along the ways of Earth evolution, sharing the lot of Man and of Earth.

Therewith, for mediaeval man, the Christ is the one Being Who in the Cosmos saved the task of Man on the Earth. Now you have the connection. Now you can

see why, in Rosicrucian times, it was again and again impressed upon the pupil: "O Man, thou art not what thou art; the Christ had to come, to take from thee thy task, in order that He might perform it for thee."

A great deal in Goethe's *Faust* has come down from mediaeval conceptions, although Goethe himself did not understand this. Recall, my dear friends, how Faust conjures up the Earth Spirit. With these mediaeval conceptions in mind, we can enter with feeling and understanding into how this Earth Spirit speaks.—

In the tides of Life,  
In Action's storm,  
A fluctuant wave,  
A shuttle free,  
Birth and the Grave,  
An eternal Sea,  
A weaving, flowing  
Life, all glowing :

Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares  
The garment of Life which the Deity wears.\*

For who is it that Faust is really conjuring up? Goethe himself, when he was writing *Faust*, most assuredly did not fully know. But if we go back from Goethe to the mediaeval Faust and listen to this mediaeval Faust in whom Rosicrucian wisdom was living, then we learn how he too wanted to conjure up a spirit. But whom did he want to conjure up in the Earth Spirit? He did not ever speak of the Earth Spirit, he spoke of *Man*. The deep longing and striving of mediaeval man was: to be Man. For he felt and knew that as Earth man he is not truly Man. How can manhood be found again? The way Faust is rebuffed, pushed on one side by the Earth Spirit is a picture of how man in his earthly form

\*Bayard Taylor's Translation.



is rebuffed by his own being. And this is why many accounts of conversion to Christianity in the Middle Ages show such extraordinary depth of feeling. They are filled with the sense that men have striven to attain the manhood that is lost, and have had to give up in despair, have rightly despaired of being able to find in themselves, within earthly physical life, this true and genuine manhood ; and so they have arrived at the point where they must say : Human striving for true manhood must be abandoned, earthly man must leave it to the Christ to fulfil the task of the Earth.

In this time, when man's relation to true manhood as well as his relation to the Christ was still understood in what I would call a superpersonal-personal manner—in this time Spirit-knowledge, Spirit-vision was still a real thing, it was still a content of experience. It ceased to be so with the fifteenth century. Then came the tremendous change, which no one really understood. But those who know of such things know how in the fifteenth, in the sixteenth centuries, and even later, there was a Rosicrucian school, isolated, scarcely known to the world, where over and over again a few pupils were educated, and where above all, care was taken that one thing should not be forgotten but be preserved as a holy tradition. And this was the following.—I will give it to you in narrative form.

Let us say, a new pupil arrived at this lonely spot to receive preparation. The so-called Ptolemaic system was first set before him, in its true form, as it had been handed down from olden times, not in the trivial way it is explained nowadays as something that has been long ago supplanted, but in an altogether different way. The pupil was shown how the Earth really and truly bears within herself the forces that are needed to determine

her path through the Universe. So that to have a correct picture of the World, it must be drawn in the old Ptolemaic sense : the Earth must be for Man in the centre of the Universe, and the other stars in their corresponding revolutions be controlled and directed by the Earth. And the pupil was told : If one really studies what are the best forces in the Earth, then one can arrive at no other conception of the World than this. In actual fact, however, it is not so. It is not so on account of man's sin. Through man's sin, the Earth—so to speak, in an unauthorised, wrongful way—has gone over into the kingdom of the Sun ; the Sun has become the regent and ruler of earthly activities. Thus, in contradistinction to a World-System given by the Gods to men with the Earth in the centre, could now be set another World-System, that has the Sun in the centre, and the Earth revolving round the Sun—it is the system of Copernicus.

And the pupil was taught that here is a mistake in the Cosmos, a mistake in the Universe brought about by human sin. This knowledge was entrusted to the pupil and he had to engrave it deeply in his heart and soul.—Men have overthrown the old World-System (so did the teacher speak) and set another in its place ; and they do not know that this other, which they take to be correct, is the outcome of their own human guilt. It is really nothing else than the expression, the revelation of human guilt, and yet men take it to be the right and correct view. What has happened in recent times ? (The teacher is speaking to the pupil.) Science has suffered a downfall through the guilt of man. Science has become a science of the Demon.

About the end of the eighteenth century such communications became impossible, but until that time there were always pupils here and there of some lonely

Rosicrucian School, who received their spiritual nourishment imbued as it were with this feeling, with this deep understanding.

Even such a man as Leibnitz, the great philosopher, was led by his own thought and deliberation to try and find somewhere a place of learning where the relation between the Copernican and Ptolemaic Systems could be correctly formulated. But he was not able to find any such place.

Things like this need to be known if one is to understand aright, in all its shades of meaning, the great change that has come about in the last centuries in the way man looks on himself and on the Universe. And with this weakening of man's living connection with himself, with this estrangement of man from himself came afterwards the tendency to cling to the external intellect that today rules all. Is this external intellect verily human experience? No, for were it human experience, it could not live so externally in mankind as it does. The intellect has really no sort of connection with what is individual and personal, with the single individual man; it is wellnigh a convention. It does not flow out of inner human experience; rather it approaches man as something outside him.

You may feel how the intellect became external by comparing the way in which Aristotle himself imparted his Logic to his pupils with the way in which it was taught much later, say in the seventeenth century.—You will remember how Kant says that Aristotle's Logic has not advanced since his time.—In the time of Aristotle, Logic was still thoroughly human. When a man was taught to think logically, he had a feeling as though—if again I may be allowed to express myself in imaginative terms—as though he were thrusting his head into



cold water and thereby became estranged from himself for a moment ; or else he had a feeling such as Alexander expressed when Aristotle wanted to impart Logic to him : You are pressing together all the bones of my head ! It is the feeling of something external. But in the seventeenth century this externality was taken as a matter of course. Men learned how from the major and minor premise the consequent must be deduced. They learned what we find treated so ironically in Goethe's *Faust* :

“ The first was so, the second so.  
Therefore the third and fourth are so :  
Were not the first and second, then  
The third and fourth had never been !

“ There will your mind be drilled and braced,  
As if in Spanish boots 'twere laced ! ”\*

Whether, like Alexander, one feels the bones of one's head all pressed together, or whether one is laced up in Spanish boots with all this First, Second, Third, Fourth—we have in either case a true picture of what one feels.

But this externality of abstract thought was no longer *felt* in the time when Logic began to be taught in the schools. Today of course this has more or less ceased. Logic is no longer specifically taught in the schools. It is rather as if there had once been a time when hundreds and hundreds of people had put on the same uniform under direction, and done it with enthusiasm, and then afterwards there came a time when they did it of their own free will without giving it a thought.

During all the time however when the Logic of the abstract was gaining the upper hand, the old spiritual knowledge was incapable of going forward. Hence we see it in its turn becoming external, and assuming a form

\*Bayard Taylor's Translation.

of which examples are to be found in the writings of Eliphas Levi or the publications of Saint-Martin. These are the last offshoots of the old Spirit-knowledge and Spirit-vision.

What do we find in a book such as Eliphas Levi's, *The Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*? In the first place there are all kinds of signs—Triangles, Pentagrams and so forth. We find words from languages in use in bygone ages, especially from the Hebrew. And we find that what in earlier times was life and at the same time knowledge that could pass over into man's action and into man's ideas—this we find has become bereft of ideas on the one hand, and on the other hand has degenerated into external magic. There is speculation as to the symbolic meaning of this or that sign, concerning all of which the modern man, if he is honest, would have to confess that he can find nothing particular in it. There are also practices connected with all manner of rites, while those who spoke of these rites and frequently practised them were far from having any clear notion at all of their spiritual connection. Such books are invariably pointers to what was once understood in olden times, was once an inward knowledge-experience, but when Eliphas Levi, for example, was writing his books, was no longer understood. As for Saint-Martin—of him I have already written in the *Goetheanum Weekly*.

Thus we see how what had once been interwoven into the soul-and-spirit of man's life, could not be held there but fell a victim to complete want of understanding.

The common impulse and striving for the Divine that shows itself in the feeling of man from the fifteenth to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is genuine and true. Beautiful things are to be found in this impulse, things lovely and sublime. Much that has come from

these times and that is far too little noticed today has about it as it were a magic breath—the genuine spell of the Spiritual.

Side by side, however, with all this, a seed is sprouting, the seed of the lack of understanding of old spiritual truths. We have therewith a hardening, ossifying process, and a growing impossibility to approach the Spiritual in a way that is in accord with the age. We come across men of the eighteenth century who speak of a downfall of all that is human, and of the rise of a terrible materialism. Often it seems as though what these men of the eighteenth century say applies just as well to our own time. And yet it is not so ; what they say does not apply to the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century. For in the nineteenth century a further stage has been reached. What was still regarded in the eighteenth century with a certain abhorrence on account of its demoniacal character, has come to be taken quite as a matter of course. The men of the nineteenth century had not the power to say : Copernicus !—Yes ; but such a conception of the Universe was only able to arise because man did not become on Earth that which he should have become, and so the Earth was left without a ruler and the rulership passed over to the unrighteous lords of the world (the expression occurs again and again in mediaeval writings), these took over the leadership of the Earth—even as the Christ left the Sun and united Himself with the destiny of the Earth.

Only now, at the end of the nineteenth century, has it again become possible to look into these things with a clear vision such as man possessed in olden times ; only now in the Michael Age has the possibility come again. We have spoken repeatedly of the dawn of the Michael Age, and of its character. But there are tasks that belong



to this Michael Age, and it is possible now to point to these tasks, after all that we have been considering in the Christmas Meeting and since, about the evolution of Spirit-vision throughout the centuries.

## V

### OCCULT SCHOOLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WE have seen how the old knowledge that was once acquired by means of instinctive clairvoyance gradually faded into a kind of evening twilight. It is difficult to find any trace of that old wisdom in modern times, particularly after the eighteenth century, for what I have told you is really true, namely that in recent times what has persisted—or rather, to put it more correctly, what has only recently made its appearance, is the external observation of Nature, Logic, the sequence of abstract thoughts. But neither with external observation of Nature nor with the mere sequence of abstract logical thoughts can a bridge be built for man whereby he may attain to reality. Much of the ancient wisdom has nevertheless maintained a sort of existence in traditional form and may be found even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century. And in order that we may orientate ourselves rightly to the important subjects with which we shall have to deal, I should like today to speak further about some of the ideas that were still to be found in the first half of the nineteenth century and are really survivals of the ancient wisdom.

I relate these things to you in order that you may see how in a time that does not lie so very far back, the whole manner of thinking was nevertheless entirely different from what it is today. As I said before, it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at these things, for it is single individuals

—living all alone, or having around them at the most a small circle of pupils—who carried on the ancient wisdom, preserving it in secret, often without themselves understanding its wonderfully deep foundation. A similar picture has really to be made of the conditions as they were in still earlier times, for it is quite certain that the two characters who are familiar to you under the names of Faust and Paracelsus encountered in the course of their wanderings such lonely individuals—cave-dwellers of the soul we may call them—and learned a great deal from them ; learned from them what they themselves afterwards developed and elaborated through an inner faculty of their own, a faculty that was in their cases, too, of a rather instinctive nature.

What I am now going to relate to you was however much later, it was in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Once more we find a small group—call it a school if you will—a lonely school of Central Europe. There, in this little circle, was to be found a deep and penetrating teaching concerning Man. A long time ago, on a spiritual path, I became aware that at a certain place in Central Europe there existed such a small company of men who had knowledge. As I have said, I learned to know of it on a spiritual path ; I was not able at that time to make observations in the physical world, since I was not then in the physical world, but in a spiritual way it became known to me that a little company of this kind existed.

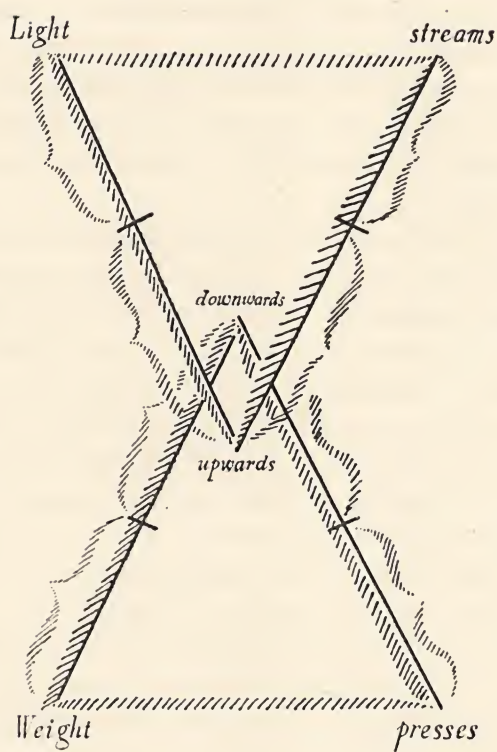
I should, however, not speak of what was taught within this little company, had not the essence of what was hidden in it subsequently again disclosed itself to research made independently through Spiritual Science ; I should not speak of it, had I not myself, so to speak, found the things anew. For it is just in the *refinding* that



one obtains the right orientation to the wisdom that has survived from olden times, and that is truly overpowering in its greatness. From this little company of which I speak, a tradition goes right back in history, back through the whole of the Middle Ages into the times of antiquity that I described to you in the lectures given at the Christmas Meeting, the times, that is to say, of Aristotle. The tradition does not, however, come directly from Greece ; it comes from Asia, by way of what was brought over to Asia from Macedonia by Alexander.

Within this little company is known and taught in all exactness a deep and penetrating teaching concerning Man, in respect especially of two human faculties. We may see there a spiritual scientist—he may truly be so called—who is a fully developed Master, instructing his pupils. The symbols by which he teaches them consist in certain geometrical forms, let us say for example a form such as this—(Two intersecting triangles)—and at the points are generally to be found some words in Hebrew. It was impossible to find any direct connection with such symbols, one could do nothing with them directly. And the pupils of this master knew through the instructions they received that what, for example, Eliphaz Levi gives later on, is in reality nothing more than a talking around the subject, for the pupils were at that time still able to learn how the true meaning of such symbols is only arrived at when these symbols are re-discovered in the nature and being of the human organisation itself.

We find in particular one symbol that played a great part for this little company of men. You get the symbol when you draw apart this “Solomon’s Key,” so that the one triangle comes down and the other is raised up. The symbol thus obtained played, as I said, a significant part



FORM  
MATTER

even as late as the nineteenth century, within this little community or school.

The Master then made the members of his little circle of pupils take up a certain attitude with their bodies. They had to assume such a position that the body itself as it were inscribed this symbol. He made them stand with their legs far apart, and their arms stretched out above. Then by lengthening the lines of the arms downwards, and the lines of the legs upwards, these four lines came to view in the human organism itself. A line was then drawn to unite the feet, and another line to unite the hands above. These two joining lines were felt as lines of force ; the pupil became conscious that they do really exist. It became clear to him that currents pass, like electro-magnetic currents, from the left finger-tips to the right finger-tips, and again from the left foot to the right foot. So that in actual fact the human organism itself writes into space these two intersecting triangles.

The next step was for the pupil to learn to feel what lies in the words : " Light streams upwards, Weight bears downwards." The pupil had to experience this in deep meditation, standing in the attitude I have described. Thereby he gradually came to the point where the teacher was able to say to him : " Now you are about to experience something that was practised over and over again in the ancient Mysteries." And the pupil attained then in very truth to this further experience, namely that he experienced and felt the very marrow within his bones. (Diagram.)

You will be able to obtain some feeling for these things if you will bring what I am saying into connection with something I said to you only yesterday. I told you then, in another connection, that if men continue only



to think so abstractly as has become the custom in the course of time, then this living in abstract thoughts remains something external ; man as it were externalises himself. It is the exact opposite that occurs when, in this way, a consciousness of the bones from inside is attained.

But now there is something else that will help you to come to an understanding of the matter. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is yet true that such a book as my *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* cannot be grasped by mere Logic, it must be understood by the whole human being. And in point of fact you will not understand what is said in that book concerning Thinking, unless you know that in reality man experiences Thought by means of the inner knowledge and feeling of his skeleton. A man does not really think with the brain, he thinks with his skeleton, when he thinks in sharply defined thoughts. And when thought becomes concrete, as is the case in the *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, then it passes over into the whole human being.

But now the pupils of this Master went further still ; they learned to feel the *inside*, the inner nature, of the bones. Therewith they were able to experience a last example of what was practised in manifold ways in the ancient Mystery Schools, they learned to experience symbols by making their own organism into these symbols ; for only so can symbols be really and truly experienced. Explanation and interpretation of symbols is really nonsense ; so too is all theorising about symbols. The true attitude to symbols is to make them and actually *experience* them. It is the same as with fables and legends and fairy tales.—These should never be received merely abstractly, one must identify oneself with them. There is always something in man whereby he can enter

into all the figures of the fairy tale, whereby he can make himself one with the fairy tale. And so it is with these true symbols of olden times, which come originally from spiritual knowledge ; I have expressed it by writing these words in your own language. (See diagram.)

In modern times there is little sense if Hebrew words are written, words that are no longer fully understood ; for then the man who reads them is not inwardly quickened to life, he has not an inward experience of the symbol, rather he is cramped by it. It is as though his bones were broken. And that is what really happens—spiritually of course—when one studies seriously such writings as those of Eliphas Levi.

Thus, then, did these pupils learn to experience the inside of their bones. But, my dear friends, when you begin to experience the inside of the bones, you are really no longer in your body. If you hold something in your finger a few inches in front of your nose, the object you are holding is not in you ; just as little is what you experience within your bones really in you. You go inwards, it is true, but nevertheless you go out of yourself. And this going out of oneself, this going to the Gods, this going into the spiritual world, is what the pupils of that lonely school learned to grasp and understand. For they learned to know the lines which from the side of the Gods were drawn into the world, the lines that were drawn by the Gods to establish and found the world. They found in one direction, namely through Man, the path to the Gods.

And then the teacher put into words what the pupil was experiencing.—He expressed it in a sentence that will naturally appear ludicrous and paradoxical to many people today but that holds nevertheless, as you will be able to recognise, a deep truth :—

Behold the man of bone,  
And thou beholdest Death.

Look within the bones

And thou beholdest the Awakener—

that is, the Awakener of man in the Spirit, The Being who brings man into connection with the world of the Gods.

Now in the time of which we are speaking, not very much could be attained on this path ; something however could be attained. Something of the teaching concerning the evolution of the Earth through different metamorphoses became clear to the pupils. Through being able to place themselves into the Spirit-being of Man, they learned to look back into Atlantean times and even farther. As a matter of fact very many things that were not in those times written down or printed but were related by word of mouth concerning the evolution of the Earth, had their origin in a knowledge and insight that came about in this way.

Such was one of the teachings given in this school.

Another teaching is also very interesting. This teaching brought to light in a practical manner the higher position of Man in respect to the animals. Facts that we put to practical use in various ways and that are of great value to us, were known and understood even as late as the nineteenth century by men who based their knowledge on good old traditions of knowledge and insight. We are proud today that we have police-dogs who are able to track out all kinds of wrongdoing in life. This practical use had not been thought of in olden times. But the faculty of dogs, for example, in this direction was even better known than it is today. Man had insight to perceive around the human being, a very fine substance, finer than anything that can be seen or



smelt or sensed in any way. And it was known that there is a fine fluid belonging also to the world as a whole. It was recognised as a special differentiation of warmth-currents, in union with all manner of other currents, which were looked upon as electro-magnetic ; and the scent of the dog was connected with these currents of warmth and electro-magnetism. The pupils of that little school of which I have been telling you, had their attention drawn to the same kind of faculty in other animals too. It was shown to them how this sense for a fine fluid flowing through the world was present in a very great many animals. And then it was pointed out to them how that which in the case of the animal develops downwards in the direction of the coarse and material, develops in man upwards into a quality of soul.

And now we come to something taught in this school that is of the very greatest interest. It was taught by reference to facts of external anatomy, but a deeply spiritual truth was indicated. It was said to the pupil : "Behold, Man is a Microcosm ; he imitates in his organism what takes place in the great structure of the Universe." Nor was Man regarded as a microcosm, as a little world, only in respect of the *processes* that go on within him. What shows itself *plastically* in man, in plastic forms and structures—this too was referred back to processes in the external world.

Thus, profound and solemn attention was given in this school to the passage of the Moon through First Quarter, Full Moon, Last Quarter, New Moon ; they learned to watch how the Moon in this way goes through twenty-eight to thirty phases. They watched out in the Cosmos the passage of the Moon through her phases. They watched the Moon as she moves within her orbit. They saw how she describes her twenty-eight to thirty

curves or turns and they understood how Man has in his spinal column these twenty-eight to thirty vertebrae and how the development of the spinal column in the embryo corresponds with the movements and forces of the Moon. They saw in the form and shape of the human spinal column the copy of the monthly movement of the Moon. And in the twenty-eight to thirty nerves that go out from the spinal column into the whole organism, they saw a copy of the streams that the Moon sends down continually upon the Earth, sending them down at the various stages of her path in the heavens. Actually and literally, in these continuations of the vertebrae they saw a reflection of the inpouring of the Moon-streams. In short, in what the human being bears within him in the nerves of the spinal marrow together with the spinal marrow itself, they saw something that unites him with the Cosmos, that brings him into living connection with the Cosmos.

All this that I have indicated to you was presented to the pupil. And he was then made to observe something else. It was said to him : " Look at the optic nerve : watch how it goes from the brain across into the eye. You will see that in the course of its passage into the eye it is divided into very fine threads. How many threads ? The threads that go from the optic nerve into the inside of the eye are exactly as many in number as the nerves that go out from the spinal marrow ; there are twenty-eight to thirty of them. So that we may say, a spinal marrow system in miniature goes from the brain through the optic nerve into the eye."

Thus has Man—so said the teacher to his pupils—thus has Man received this thirty-membered system of nerves and spinal marrow from the Gods, who in primeval antiquity formed and shaped his existence ; but

Man himself has fashioned, in his eye, in his sense-world-beholding eye, a copy of the same ; there, in the front of the head-organism he has fashioned for himself a copy of what the Gods have made of him.

After this, the pupil's attention was directed to the following. The organisation of the spinal marrow stands, as we have seen, in connection with the Moon. But on the other hand, through the special relationship that the Moon has to the Sun, we have a year of twelve months ; and from the human brain twelve nerves go out to the various parts of the organism, the twelve chief nerves of the brain. In this respect, Man, in his head organisation, is a microcosm, in respect, namely, of the relationship between Sun and Moon. In the whole form and figure of Man is expressed an imitation of the processes out yonder in the Cosmos.

Again, the pupil was taught to observe something more. He has seen how in the optic nerve, through the way the optic nerve is split up into thirty divisions, Man imitates the Moon system of the spine. And he has seen how twelve nerves go out from the brain. But now again, when the particular part of the brain that sends the olfactory nerve into the nose is examined the fact is disclosed that, there, in that little portion of the brain the whole big brain is imitated. Just as in the eye the system of nerves and spinal marrow is imitated, so in the organ of smell the whole brain is imitated, inasmuch as the olfactory nerve enters the nose in twelve divisions, in twelve strands. So that Man has an actual, miniature human being in front, here, in his head. And then the pupil was made to observe that anatomically this miniature human being is no more than a mere indication. Things grow different; only the most minute anatomical investigation could avail here ; although on the other



hand, as it were in compensation, they express themselves especially strongly in the astral body. Having however only bare indications of them, they cannot be made use of in ordinary life. Yet we can learn to do so. And even as the pupil was shown how to experience the inside of his bones, so was he shown how to experience, in a really living way, this particular part of his being.

And here we come to something that is in truth more akin to the whole Western outlook than are many other things that come over to us from the East. For the East too speaks of this concentration on the root of the nose, this concentration on the point between the eyebrows. (This is how the exact spot is defined.) But in truth this concentration is a concentration on the miniature man that is situated in this spot and can be grasped astrally. A meditation can actually be so formed as to enable one to apprehend something in the region like a miniature man in embryonic development. The pupil in that school received this guidance: he learned to apprehend, in intensely concentrated thought, a kind of embryonic development of a miniature human being.

By this means did the pupils who had the faculties for it, develop the two-petalled lotus-flower.\* And then it was said to them: The animal develops this faculty downwards, to the fluid of warmth and of electro-magnetism. Man on the other hand develops into the astral what has its place here in the head and nose. At first sight it appears to be merely a sense of smell, but the faculty, the activity of the eye plays over into it. Man develops this into the astral. He acquires the faculty whereby he is able, not merely to follow that fluid as do the animals, but to evoke continual interchange with the astral light, and to perceive by means of the two-petalled

\*See *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* by Rudolf Steiner.

lotus-flower what he is continually writing into the astral light his whole life long. The dog scents only that which has remained, that which is there present. Man has a different experience. Inasmuch as he moves with his two-petalled lotus-flower, even when he cannot perceive with it, he is forever writing everything that is in his thoughts into the astral light ; and now he acquires the faculty that enables him to follow what he has written ; and to perceive at the same time something else, namely, the true difference between Good and Evil.

In this manner echoes of ancient primeval treasures of wisdom were still present, of which the rudiments were still taught in later days, even practically. And we can see how very much has been lost under the influence of the materialistic streams that began to work so forcibly about the middle of the nineteenth century. For such things as I have been indicating to you were still, to a certain degree at least, experienced and known in certain circles, isolated and hermit-like though they were. And in the most varied domains of life knowledge was still derived from such hidden sources, knowledge that was later entirely disregarded, and that many today long to find again. But on account of the crude methods that prevail in our time, external cognition cannot regain it.

Now together with all else that was taught to the pupils of that little circle, there was one special and definite teaching. It was shown to the pupil how when he makes use of the organ that is really an organ of smell raised up into the astral light, then he learns to know the true substance of all things, he learns to know *Matter*. And when he comes to a knowledge of the inside of his bony system, and thereby learns to know the true and authentic World Geometry, to know the way in which the forces have been inscribed into the world by

the Gods, then he learns to understand the *Forms* that work in the things of the world. Thus, if you would learn to know Quartz in its substance—so it was said to the pupil—then look at it with the two-petalled lotus-flower. If you would learn to know its crystal form, how the substance is given shape and form, then you must apprehend this form out of the Cosmos with the power of apprehension that you can gain by living experience of the inside of the bony system.

Or again, the pupil was taught as follows.—If you use your head-organ, then you learn to know how a plant is fashioned in respect of *Substance*. If you learn to experience the inside of your bony system, then you learn to know how a certain plant *grows*, why it has this or that form of leaf, this or that arrangement of its leaves, why it unfolds its blossoms in this or that manner.

Everything that is Form had to be understood in the one way, everything that is Substance in the other way. And it is really interesting to find, when we go back to Aristotle, how he makes this distinction in respect of everything that exists, the distinction between Form and Substance. In later times, of course, it was taught in a merely abstract way.

In the stream that came from Greece to Europe the abstractness with which these things were set forth in books was enough to drive one to despair ; this went on throughout the Middle Ages, and in still more recent times has gone from bad to worse. But if you go back to Aristotle, you find that, with him, Forms really lead back to the experience I described, you find with him the true insight into things that is able to see in every head that which he calls the Matter or Substance in the things. This insight possessed by Aristotle was the aspect of his teaching that was carried into Asia.



But now the inner knowledge—that is to say, the knowledge that is in accord with the Akashic Records—the inner knowledge of the philosophy taught in Greece, points us to something of which I could naturally only give quite an external indication in my *Riddles of Philosophy*, where I showed how Aristotle held the view that in Man, Form and Matter flow into one another ; in Man, Matter is Form and Form Matter. You will find this where I am speaking of Spirit in *Riddles of Philosophy*.

Aristotle himself, however, taught it in quite a different way. Aristotle taught that when you approach the minerals, you experience in the first place their *Form* by means of the inside of the bones of the lower leg, and you experience their *Substance* in the organ of the head. The two are far apart. Man holds them apart, Form and Substance ; in the mineral kingdom itself they come together in crystallisation. When man comes to an understanding of the plant, then he experiences its Form by means of his experience of the inside of the thigh-bone, its Substance once more by means of the organ of the head, the two-petalled lotus-flower. The two experiences have already come a little nearer. And when man experiences the animal, then he feels the animal in its Form through the experience he has of the inside of the bones of the lower arm, and again he feels its Substance through the organ of the head—this time the two are very near together. And if now man experiences Man himself, then he experiences the Form of Man through the inside of the upper arm that is connected with the brain by way of the speech formation. I have often spoken of this in my introductory words on Eurhythmy. There the two-petalled lotus-flower unites with what goes from the inside of the upper arm to the brain. And particularly in speech we experience our

fellow human being no longer divided as to Form and Content, but as *one* in Form and Content.

This teaching still survived in all its concreteness in the time of Aristotle. And as we have said, a trace of it can still be found as late as the nineteenth century. But there we come to an abyss. In the 'forties of the nineteenth century these things were utterly and completely lost. And the abyss lasted until the end of the nineteenth century when the coming of the Michael Age gives the possibility for these truths to be found again. When, however, men step over this abyss, they are really stepping over a threshold. And at the threshold stands a Guardian. Men were not able to see this Guardian when they went past him between the years 1842 and 1879. But now they must, for their own good, look back and take note of him. For to continue not heeding him and to live on into the following centuries without heeding him would bring terrible trouble upon mankind.

## VI

### THE TASKS OF THE MICHAEL AGE

THE Michael period into which the world has been entering ever since the last third of the nineteenth century, and into which human beings will have to enter with increasing consciousness, is very different from former periods of Michael. For so it is in the earthly evolution of mankind. One after another the seven great Archangel Spirits enter from time to time into the life of man. Thus, after given periods of time a certain guidance of the world—such as the guidance of Gabriel or Uriel, Raphael or Michael—is repeated. Our own period is, however, essentially different from the preceding period of Michael. This is due to the fact that man stands in quite another relation to the spiritual world since the first third of the fifteenth century than he ever did before. This new relation to the spiritual world also determines a peculiar relation to the Spirit guiding the destinies of mankind, whom we may call by the ancient name of Michael.

Recently I have been speaking to you again of the Rosicrucian Movement. Rosicrucianism, I remarked, has indeed degenerated to charlatanry in many quarters. Most of that which has been transmitted to mankind under the name is charlatanry. Nevertheless, as I have explained on former occasions, there did exist an individuality whom we may describe by the name of Christian Rosenkreutz. This individuality is, in a sense, the type and standard : he reveals the way in which an enlightened spirit—a man of spiritual knowledge—could



enter into relation with the spiritual world at the dawn of the new phase of humanity.

To Christian Rosenkreutz it was vouchsafed to ask many questions, deeply significant riddles of existence, and in quite a new way when compared with the earlier experiences of mankind. You see, while Rosicrucianism was arising, directing the mind of man—with “Faustian” endeavour, as it was sometimes called in later times—towards the spiritual world, an abstract naturalistic science was arising on the other hand. The bearers of this modern stream of spiritual life, men like Galileo, Giordano Bruno, Copernicus or Kepler—worthy as they are of fullest recognition—were differently situated from the Rosicrucians, who wanted to foster, not a merely formal or abstract, but a true knowledge of the world. The Rosicrucians perceived in their own human life and being how utterly the times had changed, and with it the whole relation of the Gods to mankind.

We may describe it as follows.—Quite distinctly until the fourth century A.D., and in a rudimentary way even until the twelfth and thirteenth century, man was able to draw forth from himself real knowledge about the spiritual world. In doing the exercises of the old Mysteries, he could draw forth from himself the secrets of existence. For the humanity of olden times it really was so: the Initiates drew forth, what they had to say to mankind, from the depths of their souls to the surface of their thought—their world of ideas. They had the consciousness that they were drawing forth their knowledge from the inner being of the human soul. The exercises they underwent were intended, as you know, to stir the human heart to its depths, to inform the human heart and mind with experiences which man does not undergo in the ordinary round of life. Thereby the secrets of the

world of the Gods were, so to speak, drawn forth from the depths, from the inner being of man.

Man, however, cannot see the secrets he draws out of himself while in the very act of doing so. True, in the old instinctive clairvoyance man did behold the secrets of the world : he beheld them in Imagination ; he beheld them hearingly in Inspiration ; he united himself with them in Intuition.

These things, however, are impossible so long as man merely stands there alone—just as little as it is possible for me to draw a triangle without a board. The triangle I draw on the board portrays to me what I bear in a purely spiritual way within me. The triangle as a whole—all the laws of the triangle are in me ; but I draw the triangle on the board, thereby bringing home to myself what is really there within me. So it is when we make external diagrams. And it is the same when it is a question of deriving real knowledge out of the being of man, after the manner of the ancient Mysteries. This knowledge too must, in a sense, be written somewhere. Every such knowledge, in effect, to be seen in the Spirit, must be inscribed in that which has been called from time immemorial “the astral light,”—i.e., in the fine substantiality of the Akasha. Everything must be written there, and man must be able to develop the faculty of writing in the astral light.

This faculty has depended on many and varied things in the course of human evolution. Not to speak, for the moment, of pristine ages, I will leave on one side the first Post-Atlantean epoch, the ancient Indian. At that time it was somewhat different. Let me begin with the ancient Persian epoch, as described in my *Outline of Occult Science*. There was in that time instinctive clairvoyance, there was knowledge of the divine-spiritual

world. This knowledge could be written in the astral light so that man could behold it, inasmuch as the Earth, the solid Earth, afforded resistance. The writing itself is done, needless to say, with spiritual organs ; but these organs also require a basis of resistance. The things that are thus seen in the Spirit are not inscribed, of course, on the Earth itself ; they are written into the astral light. But the Earth acts as a ground of resistance. In the old Persian epoch the seers could feel the resistance of the Earth ; thereby alone, the perceptions they drew forth from their inner being grew into actual visions.

In the next, the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, all the knowledge that the Initiates drew forth from their souls was able to be written in the astral light by virtue of the fluid element. You must conceive it rightly. The Initiate of the old Persian epoch looked to the solid earth. Wherever there were plants or stones, the astral light reflected back to him his inner vision. The Initiate of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch looked into the sea, into the river, or into the falling rain, the rising mist. When he looked into the river or the sea, he saw the secrets that endure. Those secrets, on the other hand, which relate to the transient—to the creation of the Gods in transient things—he beheld in the downpouring rain or the ascending mist. You must familiarise yourself with the idea. The ancients had not the prosaic, matter-of-fact way of seeing the mist and rain which is ours today. Rain and mist said very much to them—revealed to them the secrets of the Gods.

Then in the Graeco-Latin period, the visions were like a Fata Morgana in the air. The Greek saw his Zeus, his Gods, in the astral light ; but he had the feeling that the astral light only reflected the Gods to him under the proper conditions. Hence he assigned his Gods to special



places—places where the air could offer the proper resistance to the inscriptions in the astral light. And so it remained until the fourth century A.D. Even among the first Fathers of the Christian Church, and notably the old Greek Fathers, there were many (as you may even prove from their writings) who saw this Fata Morgana of their own spiritual visions through the resistance of the air in the astral light. Thus they had clear knowledge of the fact that out of Man, the Logos, the Divine Word revealed Himself through Nature. But in the course of time this knowledge faded and grew feeble. Echoes of it still continued in a few specially gifted persons, even until the twelfth or thirteenth century. But when the age of abstract knowledge came—when men became entirely dependent on the logical sequence of ideas and the results of sense-observation—then neither earth nor water nor air afforded resistance to the astral light, but only the element of the warmth-ether. It is unknown, of course, to those who are completely wrapped up in their abstract thoughts. They do not know that these abstract thoughts are also written in the astral light. They are written there indeed ; but in this process the element of the warmth-ether is the sole resistance.

The following is now the case. Remember once more that in the ancient Persian epoch men had the solid earth as a resistance so as to behold their entries in the astral light. What is thus contained in the astral light—all that, for which the solid earth is the resistance—rays on and out, but only as far as the sphere of the Moon. Farther it cannot go. Thence it rays back again. Thus it remains, so to speak, with the Earth. Man beholds the secrets reflected by virtue of the Earth ; they remain because of the pressure of the lunar sphere.

Now let us consider the Egypto-Chaldean epoch. The water on the Earth reflects. What is thus reflected goes as far as the Saturn-sphere. And now it is Saturn that presses for man on Earth to "hold" what he beholds in spirit. And if we go on into Graeco-Latin period—even into the twelfth or thirteenth century—we find the visions inscribed in the astral light by virtue of the air. This time it goes to the very end of the cosmic sphere and thence returns. It is the most fleeting of all ; yet still it is such that man remains united with his visions. The Initiates of all these epochs could say to themselves every time : Such spiritual vision as we have had—through earth or water or air—it is there. But when the most modern time arrived, only the element of the warmth-ether was left to offer resistance. And the element of the warmth-ether carries all that is written in it out into the cosmic realms, right out of space into the spiritual worlds. It is no longer there.

It is so indeed, my dear friends. Take the most pedantic of modern professors with his ideas. He must of course *have* ideas—some of them have none at all—but if he has ideas, then they are entered through the warmth-ether in the astral light. Now the warmth-ether is transient and fleeting ; all things become merged and fused in it at once, and go out into cosmic distances.

Such a man as Christian Rosenkreutz knew that the Initiates of olden times had lived with their visions. They had fastened and confirmed what they beheld, knowing that it was there, reflected somewhere in the heavens—be it in the Moon sphere or in the planetary sphere, or at the end of the Universe—it was reflected. But now, nothing at all was reflected. For the immediate, wide-awake vision of man, nothing at all was reflected. Now men could find ideas about Nature, the Copernican

cosmology could arise, all manner of ideas could be formed, but they were scattered in the warmth-ether, out into cosmic vast.

Then it came about that Christian Rosenkreutz, by inspiration of a higher Spirit, found a way to perceive the reflected radiation after all, in spite of the fact that it was only a reflection by the warmth-ether. It was brought about as follows. Other conditions of consciousness—dim, sub-conscious and sleep-like—were called into play ; conditions in which man is even normally outside his body. Then it became perceptible that that which is discovered with modern abstract ideas is after all inscribed, albeit not in space, but in the spiritual world. This, then, is what we see in the Rosicrucian Movement : the Rosicrucians, as it were in a transition stage, made themselves acquainted with all that could be discovered about Nature in this epoch. They received it into themselves and assimilated it as only man can assimilate it. They enhanced into true Wisdom what for the others was only Science. Holding it in their souls, they tried to pass over into sleep in highest purity and after intimate meditations. Then the divine-spiritual worlds—no longer the spatial end of the Universe, but the divine-spiritual worlds—brought back to them in a spiritually real language what had first been apprehended in abstract ideas.

In Rosicrucian schools, not only was the Copernican cosmology taught, but in special states of consciousness its ideas came back in the form I explained here during the last few days. It was the Rosicrucians, above all, who realised that that which man receives in modern knowledge must first be carried forth, so to speak, and offered to the Gods, that the Gods may translate it into their language and give it back again to men.



The possibility has remained until this present. It is so indeed, my dear friends. If you are touched by the Rosicrucian principle as here intended, study the system of Haeckel, with all its materialism ; study it, and at the same time permeate yourselves with the methods of cognition indicated in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. Take what you learn in Haeckel's *Anthropogenesis*. In that form it may very likely repel you. Learn it nevertheless ; learn all that can be learned about it by outer Natural Science, and carry it towards the Gods. You will get what is related about evolution in my *Outline of Occult Science*.

Such is the connection between the feeble, shadowy knowledge which man can acquire here with his physical body, and that which the Gods can give him, if with the proper spirit he duly prepares himself by the learning of this knowledge. But man must first bring towards Them what he can learn here on the Earth, for in truth the times have changed.

Moreover another thing has happened. Let a man strive as he will today ; he can no longer draw anything forth from himself as did the old Initiates. The soul no longer gives anything forth in the way it did for the old Initiates. It all becomes impure, filled with instincts, as is evident in the case of spiritualist mediums, and in other morbid or pathological conditions. All that arises merely from within, becomes impure. The time of such creation from within is past ; it was past already in the twelfth or thirteenth century. What happened can be expressed approximately as follows :

The Initiates of the old Persian epoch wrote very much in the astral light with the help of the resistance of the solid earth. When the first Initiate of the old Persian epoch appeared, the whole of the astral light, destined

for man, was like an unwritten slate. I shall speak later of the old Indian epoch. Today I shall only go back to the ancient Persian epoch. All Nature : all the elements—solid, liquid, airy and warmth-like—were an unwritten slate.

Now the Initiates of the old Persian epoch wrote on this slate as much as could be written by virtue of the resistance of the earth. There, to begin with, the secrets destined to come to man from the Gods were written in the astral light. To a certain degree the tablet was inscribed ; yet in another respect it was empty. Thus the Initiates of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch were able to continue the writing in their way ; for they gained their visions by the resistance of the water.

Then came the Greek Initiates ; they inscribed the third portion of the tablet. Now the tablet of Nature is fully inscribed ; it was quite fully inscribed by the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Then human beings began to write in the warmth-ether ; that, however, scatters and dissolves away in the vast expanse. For a time—until the nineteenth century—men wrote in the warmth-ether ; they had no inkling that these experiences of theirs stand written in the astral light. But now, my dear friends, the time has come when men must recognise : not out of themselves in the old sense, can they find the secrets of the world, but only by so preparing themselves in heart and mind that they can read what is written on the tablet which is now full of writing. This we must prepare to do today. We must make ourselves ripe for this—no longer to draw forth from ourselves like the old Initiates, but to be able to read in the astral light all that is written there. If we do so, precisely what we gain from the warmth-ether will work as an inspiration. The Gods come to meet us, and bring

to us in its reality what we have acquired by our own efforts here on Earth. And what we thus receive from the warmth-ether reacts in turn on all that stands written on the tablet by virtue of air, water and earth.

Thus is the Natural Science of today the true basis for spiritual seership. Learn first by Natural Science to know the properties of air, water and earth. Attain the corresponding inner faculties. Then, as you gaze into the airy, into the watery, into the earthy element, the astral light will stream forth. It does not stream forth like a vague mist or cloud ; but so that we can read in it the secrets of world-existence and of human life.

What, then, do we read ? We—the humanity of today—read what we ourselves have written in it. For what does it mean to say that the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians wrote in the astral light ? It was we ourselves who wrote it in our former lives on Earth.

You see, my dear friends : just as our inner memory of the common things that we experience in earthly life preserves them for us, so too the astral light preserves for us what we have written in it. The astral light is spread around us—a fully written tablet with respect to the secrets which we ourselves have inscribed. There we must read, if we would find the secrets once more. It is a kind of *evolution-memory* which must arise in mankind. A consciousness must gradually arise that there is such an evolution-memory, and that in relation to former epochs of culture the humanity of today must read in the astral light, just as we, at a later age, read in our own youth through ordinary memory. This must come into the consciousness of men. In this sense I have held the lectures this Christmas-time, so that you could see that the point is to draw forth from the astral light the secrets



that we need today. The old Initiation was directed mainly to the *subjective* life ; the new Initiation concentrates on the *objective*—that is the great difference. For all that was subjective is written in the outer world. All that the Gods have secreted into man . . . what they secreted in his sentient body came out in the old Persian epoch ; what they secreted in his intellectual or mind-soul came out during the Grecian epoch. The Spiritual soul which we are now to evolve is independent, brings forth nothing more out of itself ; it stands over against what is already there. As human beings we must find our humanity again in the astral light.

So then it was with the Rosicrucian Movement : in a time of transition it had to content itself with entering into certain dream-like conditions, and, as it were, dreaming the *higher truth* of that which Science discovers here—in a dry, matter-of-fact way—out of the Nature around us.

And this is how it has been since the beginning of the Michael epoch, since the end of the 1870's : The same thing that was attained in the way above-described in the time of the old Rosicrucians, can now be attained in a conscious way. Today, therefore, we can say : We no longer need that other condition which was half-conscious. What we need is a state of enhanced consciousness. Then, with the knowledge of Nature which we acquire, we can dive into the higher world ; and the Nature-knowledge we have acquired emerges and comes towards us from that higher world. We read again what has been written in the astral light ; and as we do so, it emerges and comes to meet us in spiritual reality. We carry up into a spiritual world the knowledge of Nature here attained, or again, the creations of naturalistic art, or the religious sentiments working

naturalistically in the soul. (Even religion has become naturalistic nowadays.) And as we carry all this upward—if we develop the necessary faculties—we do indeed encounter Michael.

So we may say : the old Rosicrucian Movement is characterised by the fact that its most illumined spirits had an intense longing to meet Michael ; but they could only do so as *in dream*. Since the end of the last third of the nineteenth century, men can meet Michael in the Spirit, in a *fully conscious way*.

Michael, however, is a peculiar being : Michael is a being who reveals nothing if we ourselves do not bring Him something from our diligent spiritual work on Earth. Michael is a silent Spirit—silent and reserved. The other ruling Archangels are Spirits who talk much—in a spiritual sense, of course ; but Michael is taciturn. He is a Spirit who speaks very little. At most He will give sparing indications, for what we learn from Michael is not really the word, but, if I may so express it—the look, the power, the direction of His gaze.

This is because Michael concerns Himself most of all with that which men *create* out of the Spirit. He lives with the consequences of all that men have created. The other Spirits live more with the causes ; Michael lives with the consequences. The other Spirits kindle in man the impulses for that which he shall do. Michael will be the true spiritual hero of Freedom ; He lets men do, and He then takes what becomes of human deeds, receives it and carries it on and out into the Cosmos, to continue in the Cosmos what men themselves cannot yet do with it.

For other beings of the Hierachy of Archangeloi, we feel that impulses are coming from Them. In a greater or lesser degree, the impulses come from Them. Michael

is the Spirit from whom no impulses come, to begin with ; for His most characteristic epoch is the one now at hand, when things are to arise out of human freedom. But when man does things out of spiritual activity or inner freedom, consciously or unconsciously kindled by the reading of the astral light, then Michael carries the human earthly deed out into the Cosmos ; so it becomes cosmic deed. Michael takes care for the results ; the other Spirits care more for the causes.

However, Michael is not only a silent, taciturn Spirit. Michael meets man with a very clear gesture of repulsion, for many things in which the human being of today still lives on Earth. For example, all knowledge that arises as to the life of men or animals or plants, tending to lay stress on inherited characteristics—on all that is inherited in physical nature—is such that we feel Michael constantly repelling it, driving it away with deprecation. He means to show that such knowledge cannot help man at all for the spiritual world. Only what man discovers in the human and animal and plant kingdoms independently of the purely hereditary nature, can be carried up before Michael. Then we receive, not the eloquent gesture of deprecation, but the look of approval which tells us that it is a thought righteously conceived in harmony with cosmic guidance. For this is what we learn increasingly to strive for : as it were to meditate, so as to strike through to the astral light, to see the secrets of existence, and then to come before Michael and receive His approving look which tells us : That is right, in harmony with the cosmic guidance.

So it is with Michael. He also sternly rejects all separating elements, such as the human languages. So long as we only clothe our knowledge in these languages, and do not carry it right up into the thoughts, we cannot



come near Michael. Therefore, today in the spiritual world there is a very significant battle. For on the one hand the Michael impulse has entered the evolution of humanity. The Michael impulse is there. But on the other hand, in the evolution of humanity there is much that will not receive this impulse of Michael but wants to reject it. Among the things that would fain reject the impulse of Michael today are the feelings of nationality. They flared up in the nineteenth century and became strong in the twentieth—stronger and stronger. By the principle of nationality many things have been ordered, or rather, have become sadly disordered in the most recent times.

All this is in terrible opposition to the Michael principle ; all this contains Ahrimanic forces which strive against the inpouring of the Michael-force into the earthly life of man. So then we see this battle of the upward-attacking Ahrimanic spirits who would like to carry upward what comes through the inherited impulses of nationality—which Michael sternly rejects and repels.

Truly today there is the most vivid spiritual conflict in this direction. For this is the state of affairs over a great portion of mankind. Thoughts are not there at all ; men only think in words, and to think in words is no way to Michael. We only come to Michael when we get through the words to real inner experiences of the Spirit—when we do not hang on the words, but arrive at real inner experiences of the Spirit.

This is the very essence, the secret of modern Initiation : to get beyond the words, to a living experience of the Spiritual. It is nothing contrary to a feeling for the beauty of language. Precisely when we no longer *think* in language, we begin to *feel* it. As a true element

of feeling, it begins to live in us and flow outward from us. This is the experience to which the man of today must aspire. Perhaps, to begin with, he cannot attain it for speech, but through writing. For in respect of writing, too, it must be said : Today men do not have the writing but the writing has them. What does it mean, "the writing has them"? It means that in our wrist, in our hand, we have a certain train of writing. We write mechanically, out of the hand. This is a thing that fetters man. He only becomes unfettered when he writes as he paints or draws—when every letter beside the next becomes a thing that is painted or drawn . . .

## Goetheanum

Then there is no longer what is ordinarily called "a handwriting." Man draws the form of the letter. His relation to the letter is objective ; he sees it before him—that is the essential thing.

For this reason, strange as it may sound, in certain Rosicrucian schools learning-to-write was prohibited, even until the fourteenth or fifteenth century ; so that the form, the mechanism which comes to expression in writing, did not enter the human being's organism. Man only approached the form of the letter when his spiritual vision was developed. Then it was so arranged that simultaneously with his learning of the conventional letters, needed for human intercourse, he had to learn others—specifically Rosicrucian letters—which are supposed to have been a secret script. They were not in-

tended as such ; the idea was that for an *A* one should



learn at the same time another sign:  $\odot$ . For then, one did not hold fast to the one sign but got free of it. Then one felt the real *A* as something higher than the mere sign of *A* or  $\odot$ . Otherwise, the mere letter *A* would be identified with that which comes forth from the human being, soaring and hovering as the living sound of it.

With Rosicrucianism many things found their way into the people. For it was one of their fundamental principles :—from the small circles in which they were united, the Rosicrucians went out into the world, as I have already told you, generally working as doctors. But at the same time, while they were doctors, they spread knowledge of many things in the wide circles into which they came. Moreover, with such knowledge, certain moods and feelings were spread. We find them everywhere, wherever the Rosicrucian stream has left its traces. Sometimes they even assume grotesque forms. For instance, out of such moods and feelings of soul, men came to regard the whole of this modern relationship to writing—and *a fortiori*, to printing—as a black art. For in truth, nothing hinders one more from reading in the astral light than ordinary writing. This artificial fixing hinders one very much from reading in the astral light. One must always first overcome this writing when one wants to read in the astral light.

At this point two things come together, one of which I mentioned a short while ago. In the production of spiritual knowledge man must always be present with full



*inner activity.* I confess that I have many note-books in which I write or put down the results I come to. I generally do not look at them again. Only, by calling into activity not only the head but the whole man, these perceptions which do indeed take hold of the entire man come forth. He who does so, by and by accustoms himself not to care so much for what he sees physically, what is already fixed ; but to remain in the activity, in order not to spoil his faculty of seeing in the astral light. It is good to practise this reticence. As far as possible, when fixing things in ordinary writing, one should adhere not to writing as such, but draw the letters and re-draw them after one's pleasure (for then it is as though you were painting, it becomes an art). Thus one acquires the faculty not to spoil the impressions in the astral light.

If we are obliged to relate ourselves to writing in the modern way, we mar our spiritual progress. For this reason, in the Waldorf School educational method, great care is taken that the human being does not go so far in writing as in the profane educational methods of today. Care is taken to enable him to remain within the Spiritual, for that is necessary.

The world must receive once more the principle of Initiation as such among the principles of civilisation. Only thereby will it come about that man, here on the Earth, will gather in his soul something with which he can go before Michael, so as to meet Michael's approving look, the look that says : " That is right, cosmically right." Thereby the will is fastened and made firm, and the human being is incorporated in the spiritual progress of the Universe. Thereby, man himself becomes a co-operator in that which is about to be instilled into the evolution of mankind on Earth by Michael—beginning now in this present epoch of Michael.

Many, many things must be taken into account if man wishes rightly to cross that abyss of which I spoke yesterday, where in truth a Guardian is standing. We shall show in the next lectures how the abyss opened out in the 1840's, and how man today, as he looks back, can find his true relation to this abyss and to this Guardian—helped by such detailed knowledge as I have once again been trying to present.